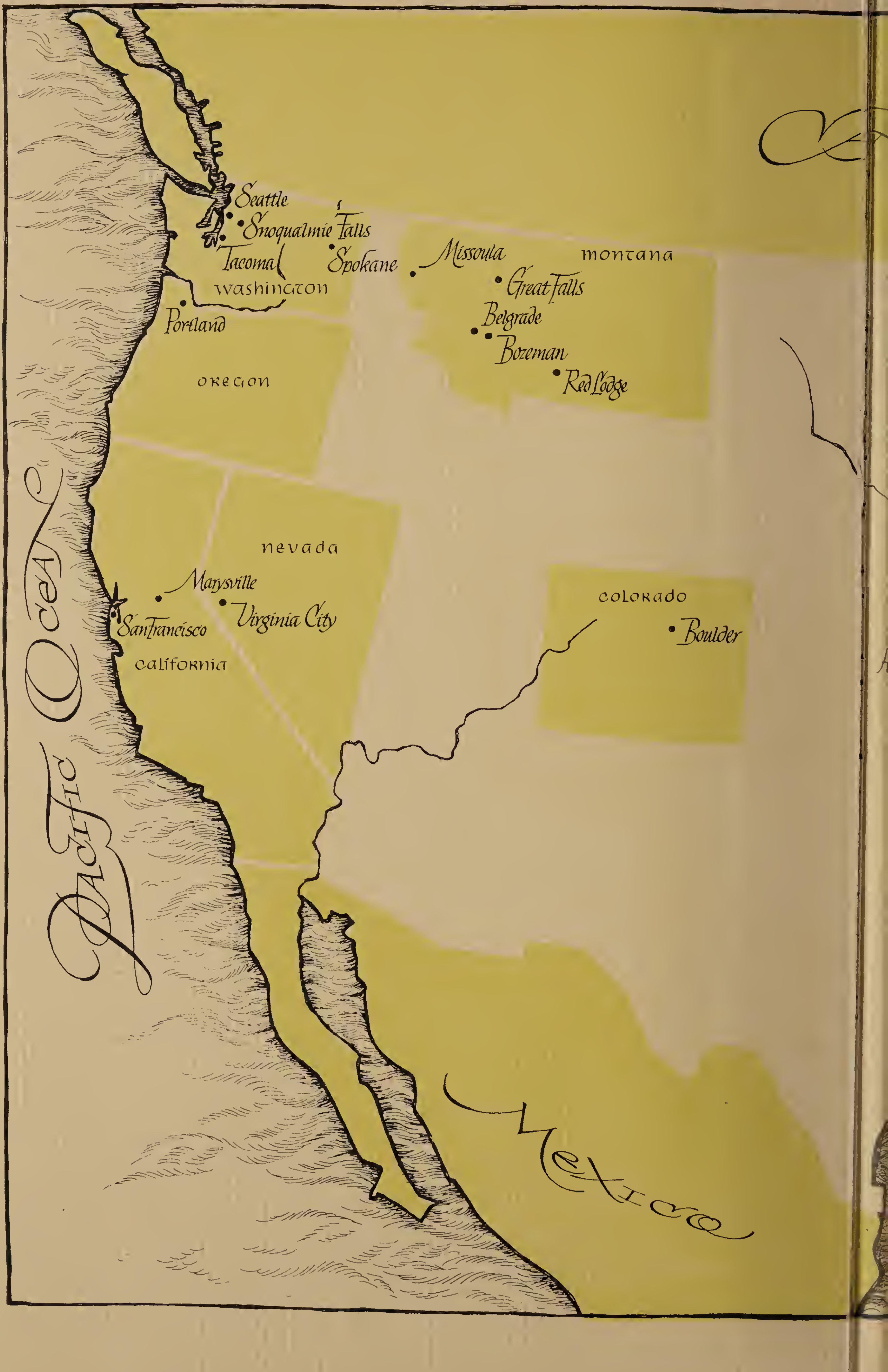
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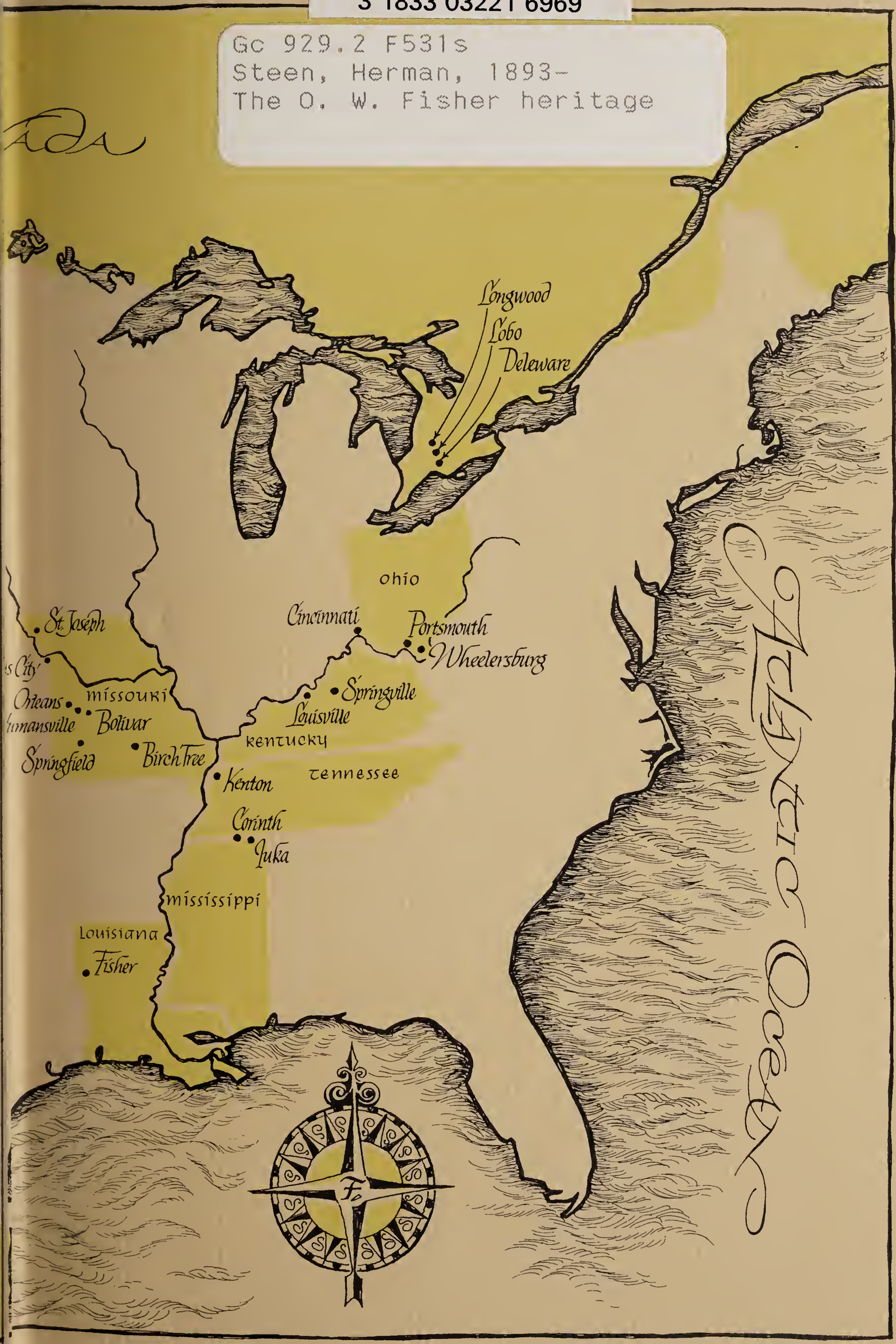

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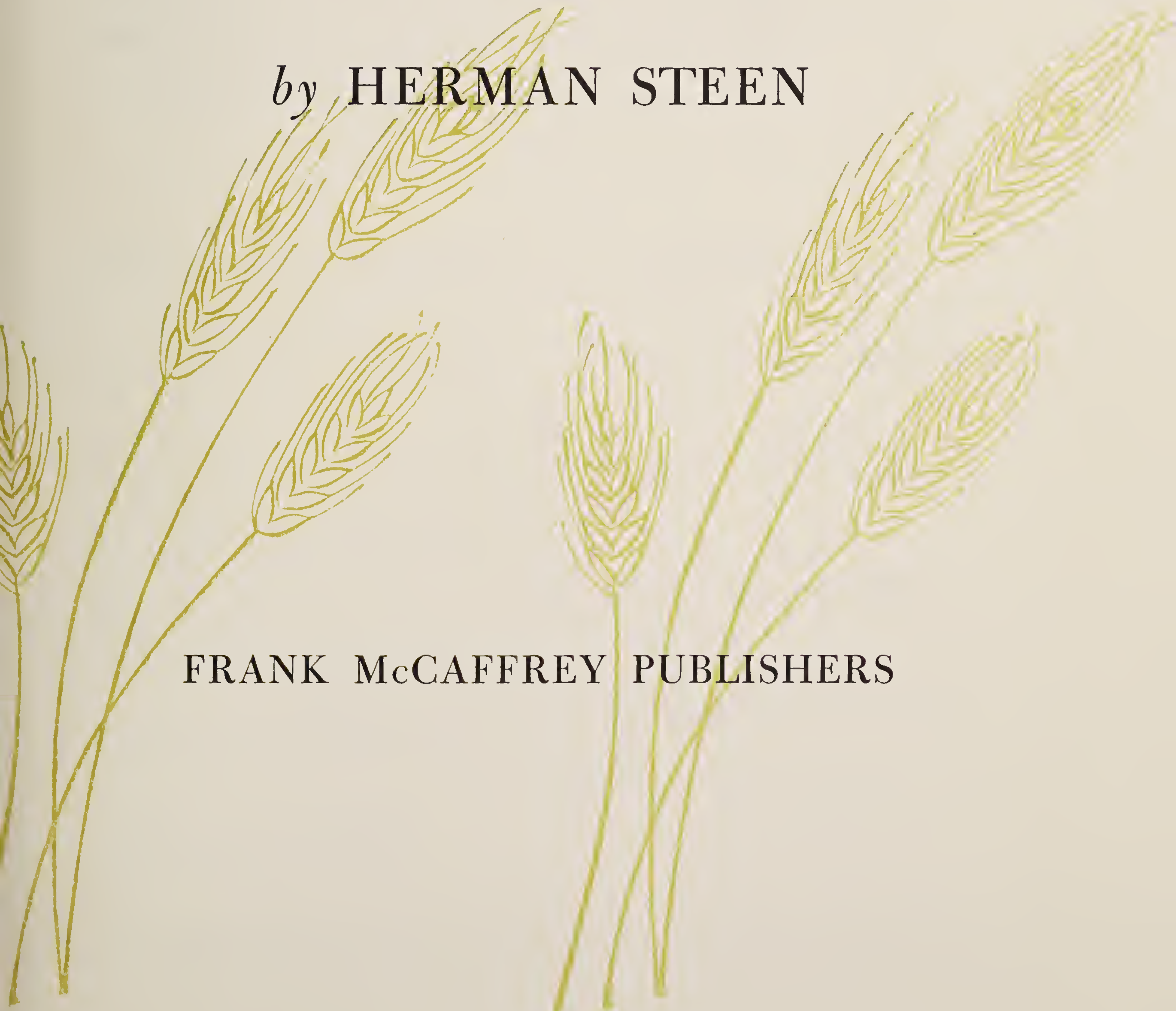
Oliver Williams Fisher

The O. W. Fisher Heritage

by HERMAN STEEN



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JANUARY 20, 1961

We are the grandchildren of Oliver Williams and Euphemia Robinson Fisher. May this history of the Fisher family be an inspiration to our grandchildren, and to our grandchildren's grandchildren, as it has been to us.

We are proud to be links in this chain, and hope that the tradition of character, honesty, integrity, self-reliance, and industry will be the everlasting heritage from, and tribute to, the accomplishments of the generations that have gone before.

Julia Fisher Hamilton
G O Fisher
Kenneth R. Fisher
George Fisher Warren
Peter Fisher
William H. Warren
Juanita Fisher Graham
John O. Warren
Irene Fisher Locke
Susanne F. Hubbach
Barnett Fisher
Jean F. McTavish
Bennett I. Fisher

The Chapters

Beginning THE FISHER SAGA
[PAGE *13*]
From humble beginning to leadership in Seattle – An American epic, with origins in Missouri

Chapter II O. W. FISHER: ANCESTRY AND YOUTH
[PAGE *15*]
Descendant of American pioneers – Poverty-stricken boyhood in Ohio – Service in Grant's army in Mississippi

Chapter III THE ROLLING STONE ADAGE DISPROVED
[PAGE *25*]
O. W. Fisher's restless wandering – Mule driver in California – Grist miller in Ontario – Lumberman in Kentucky – Marriage to Euphemia Robinson – Their home and early years in Missouri

Chapter IV AFFLUENCE DESPITE HARD TIMES
[PAGE *37*]
Business success achieved – The Fisher family and life at Humansville – Sons strike out on their own

Chapter V THE SPRINGFIELD YEARS
[PAGE *54*]
Middle age arrives – Expansion of Fisher enterprises to Louisiana – Progress of second generation

Chapter VI THE FISHERS IN MONTANA
[PAGE *69*]
Identification with state covers sixty-six year period – Family lived there early this century – Business connections continue

Chapter VII THE TIDE TAKEN AT FLOOD
[PAGE *81*]
Entry into Cascade lumber business sparked by San Francisco fire – Establishment of Grandin-Coast Lumber Company and association with the Weyerhaeusers

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Chapter VIII Early Seattle Years
[PAGE *92*]
The city in 1905 – Fishers engage in flour brokerage, real estate and banking – Founded Fisher Flouring Mills Company

Chapter IX Last Years of the Founders
[PAGE *104*]
Old age of O. W. and Euphemia Fisher – Their children reach middle age and all attain success – Grandchildren and great grandchildren

Chapter X The Second Generation
[PAGE *117*]
Five brothers associated in business – Their careers and families – Entry into new fields

Chapter XI Third and Fourth Generations
[PAGE *140*]
Sketches of grandchildren of the O. W. Fishers – Their families and business connections

Chapter XII The Fishers in Business
[PAGE *157*]
History of principal Fisher enterprises – Lumbering – Banking – Real estate – Flour milling – Insurance – Radio and television

Chapter XIII Fisher Memorabilia
[PAGE *192*]
Anecdotes and incidents relating to four generations

The Author
[PAGE *219*]

Notes
[PAGE *220*]

Genealogy
[PAGE *225*]

Index

The Photographs

[PAGE 28]
Goldtype wedding picture of O. W. and Euphemia

[PAGE 30]
Marriage Certificate of Oliver Fisher and Euphemia Robinson

[PAGE 44]
The Humansville home

[PAGES 56, 57]
The O. W. family group

[PAGE 66]
The Springfield home

[PAGE 73]
The Bozeman home

[PAGES 78, 79]
O. W. and Euphemia during their Montana era

[PAGE 99]
Fisher Flouring Mills on Harbor Island, Seattle

[PAGE 102]
Letter from O. W. to Burr

[PAGE 105]
The Belmont Place home

[PAGE 110]
Family gathering at Golden Wedding anniversary of O. W. and Euphemia

[PAGE 111]
Close-up portrait of O. W. at anniversary gathering

[PAGE *118*]
William Peter Fisher

[PAGE *120*]
Burr Fisher

[PAGE *122*]
Oliver David Fisher

[PAGE *124*]
Daniel Robinson Fisher

[PAGE *126*]
Lula Christina Fisher Warren

[PAGE *128*]
Orin Wallace Fisher

[PAGE *130*]
William Willard Warren

[PAGE *148*]
Phelps Kenneth Fisher – Christel Laes wedding

[PAGE *215*]
Golden Wedding anniversary of
Mr. and Mrs. O. D. Fisher

The Fisher Saga

ANYONE WHO KNOWS SEATTLE is aware that the Fishers are one of its respected families, with roots that run deep into the industrial and financial structure of the state of Washington.

It is unlikely that many persons in the city know the Fisher saga – the tale of heroic deeds by which this family rose from a lowly origin.

The Fisher story began with a boy whose people in Ohio were so poor that he never saw the inside of a school book after the age of eight; and with a Canadian girl whose parents fled the tyrannies and cruelties of civil war in Ireland.

By the law of probability, Oliver Williams Fisher had a chance only to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water. He had none of the elements which usually make a business man – no training, no important friends, no money, few of the social graces, virtually no education. But, he did have a driving ambition and a great talent for business, and he became a leader in several important fields.

No man has ever claimed to have been injured or badly dealt with in the process by which O. W. Fisher rose to business eminence and acquired a substantial fortune. He lived at a time when sharp practice was condoned but he scorned its use. He created no monopoly. He sold goods at prices determined in the market place and he paid going rates for labor and supplies. There was a great legion who gained prosperity chiefly because of their association with him.

O. W. Fisher and Euphemia Robinson Fisher reared a family whose members all gained distinction by their own efforts and then greatly magnified and expanded their father's business realm. Will P. and Burr had competence in merchandizing; O. D. became a genius in business management and finance; Dan a master of wheat trading; Wallace a skilled engineer. Lula married Willard Warren, who gained renown in lumber production.

The compulsion to succeed, to manage a business soundly, to be constructive and do worthwhile things, which has been reflected in all Fisher undertakings in the past, has carried over to the third and fourth generations. Among the sixteen grandchildren and forty great-grandchildren of the O. W. Fishers, there is a considerable number of persons who would be rated as "superior" by any personnel expert. The old adage, "From shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves in three generations", finds no proof in this family.

The story of Fisher achievement had its chief origin in the hardscrabble hills of the Missouri Ozarks. The second stage took place in the wide valleys which separate the mountain ranges of Montana. It reached full flower on the western slope of the Cascades in Washington and in the metropolis of Seattle. It is a part of the great epic of America.

ii

O. W. Fisher: *Ancestry and Youth*

Oliver Williams Fisher founded the family and the business dynasty which bears his name. He was born at Wheelersburg, Ohio, on September *2*, *1842*, the fourth of five sons of Peter and Lucretia Fisher.

John Tyler was President of the United States in *1842*. The nation had then about recovered from the business paralysis caused by the severe panic of the late *1830*'s. It was an era when the great national issues were the tariff, "internal improvements"[1] and restricting the extension of slavery; when a bitter controversy raged with Great Britain over the title to the "Oregon country", and the popular slogan was "*54-40* or Fight"; when Texas was an independent republic, the annexation of which was to lead to the Mexican War a few years later.

Ohio was no longer on the frontier when O. W. Fisher was born. It had been a state almost forty years, and it had a population of a million and a half. However, it bore little resemblance to the Ohio of today. Its largest city was Cincinnati, which had forty-six thousand inhabitants; Columbus and Cleveland were next, with about six thousand each. Toledo was then a mere village and Akron was yet to be founded. More than ninety per cent of the people of Ohio lived on the land, in a state of self-sufficiency which was the common condition in new countries.

The tide of westward migration which began to pour over the Alleghanies after the War of the Revolution was still in full flood in the *1840*'s. Many of the newcomers were finding homes in Ohio, but a great many more were headed "way out West", a term which in most cases referred to such distant lands as Illinois and Missouri. The Black Hawk War had prevented any consequential settlement of Wisconsin and Iowa up to that time, and west of the Missouri River there were only some venturesome trappers and traders and a few dedicated missionaries among the Indians and the buffalo. Gold would not be discovered in California until near the end of the decade. Railroads were in their infancy, with only twenty-eight hundred miles of track in the United States in *1840*; this was to increase tenfold in the next twenty years.

Before railroads, there were three avenues of travel and trade between the North Atlantic region and what is now called the Middle West. These consisted of primitive highways little better than trails; the Erie Canal-Great Lakes route; and the Ohio River. There was quite a preference for the latter, although the traveler was obliged to proceed overland across Pennsylvania or go by boat up the Potomac to reach the head of navigation on the Ohio River system. A great majority of the early settlements were established along the banks of the Ohio or along such major tributaries as the

Muskingum, the Hocking, the Scioto, the Miami and the Wabash. The southern parts of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois had many scores of thousands of settlers before their northern counterparts had emerged from the wilderness stage.

The Scioto is the largest river within the Buckeye State. It flows into the Ohio about ninety miles due south of Columbus, and at the confluence of the great rivers the pioneers founded the town of Portsmouth, the seat of Scioto County. It was a place of some consequence early in the nineteenth century because of the river commerce and travel. It was the largest and most important point between Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, and continued to be so until the railroads largely supplanted water transportation. Upriver a dozen miles from Portsmouth was Wheelersburg, the birthplace of O. W. Fisher, only a tiny hamlet in the *1840*'s and a village of but a thousand today.

Southern Ohio was not blessed with a large share of nature's bounty. A broad belt of rough, hilly land begins at the Ohio River and extends northward about fifty miles nearly all the way across the southern and southeastern parts of the state. This hill country proved to be unproductive when the pioneers made clearings in the forests and planted crops. After a time, the more enterprising settlers moved to areas where the rewards of labor promised to be better, and the process has continued generation after generation to this day. The result is that the rural part of Southern Ohio has long been populated chiefly by those who are quite similar to the mountain people of West Virginia and Kentucky; the standard of living is low and the percentage of semi-illiteracy is shockingly high. Although this condition was somewhat general in the *1840*'s, it was especially evident in the hills of Southern Ohio. O. W. Fisher thus chanced to be born in a distressingly backward area.

O. W.'s father, Peter, was born on October *6, 1805,* in Dunkeld, Perthshire, Scotland, where his family operated a hotel.[2] It is not known when Peter emigrated to America, but it is easy to understand how he reached a town on the Ohio River, for that was the most direct and most convenient way to the heart of the continent. It has not been determined when Peter first went to Portsmouth, but he lived there for a time. The records show that on March *8, 1837,* Lucretia Dodge and Peter were married in that city. It was her home and birthplace, her advent in the world having taken place on June *20, 1816.* Her parents, Daniel and Mehetabel, continued to live in Portsmouth until their deaths in the early *1870*'s.

The Dodges were from Rhode Island. Lucretia's great-grandfather, Jonathan Dodge, served in the patriot forces in the War of the Revolution. He was past fifty-six years of age when he shouldered a musket and was sworn in as a member of Colonel Danforth Keyes' regiment. He was in the army only about four and a half months, and was mustered out with the New Year of *1778.*

Typical of the westward movement of the pioneers is the history of the Dodges. Jonathan moved to Connecticut after the war. His son Oliver, who was born in Rhode Island, was married in Connecticut and lived for many years in New York and Pennsylvania. Oliver's son Daniel was born in New York, but lived for a time in Pennsylvania and then for at least fifty-five years in Ohio; he was the father of Lucretia, who was to become O. W. Fisher's mother. Daniel also had a son named Oliver Williams Dodge, and this otherwise unknown uncle furnished the name that was bestowed upon Oliver Williams Fisher.[3] The Williams in these names seems to be derived from the family of Lucretia's great-grandmother, wife of the revolutionary soldier. In addition to Williams, the Dodge ancestry includes such names as Bennett and Harris—all of them unmistakably English in origin.

Few facts are extant about Peter and Lucretia. It is known that he was a carpenter. It is also known that the family was living at Wheelersburg at the time of Peter's death in 1850, and had been there at least eight years. There were five sons and a daughter—Andrew, born May 17, 1838; Alford, born October 1, 1839; Daniel, born February 8, 1841; Oliver, born September 2, 1842; John, born February 6, 1845; and Sarah Jeanette, born October 6, 1848. John died at the age of eight, but the others will appear subsequently on these pages.

One of the many extraordinary things about O. W. Fisher is that he talked so little about his boyhood. His sons and his grandchildren do not recall that he reminisced much about his early days. He did not emphasize the hardships which undoubtedly were the lot of his youth. He is known to have told his daughter that he was born in a log cabin. He expressed regret occasionally that his schooling was so limited. Even in his old age, he didn't indulge in the patriarch's privilege of unlimited reminiscence. All his life, his habit was to be looking to the future instead of dwelling on the past.

From the sketchy information available, it seems certain that life was not easy for Peter and Lucretia and their children. Their home was not only in a poor country, but it was in one of the less flourishing villages in that region. Times were hard, wages were low, money was scarce in the West and mechanics found it hard to find steady jobs. Moreover, they were living in an area where opportunities were even fewer than in most places.

The assumption that the Fishers were extremely poor is supported by the fact that soon after Peter's death his four oldest boys all went to work to help earn what must have been at best a meager living.[4] It was then not uncommon for boys to be taken from school at tender ages, but Lucretia's heritage was Yankee and nearly all Yankees of that time believed fervently in education. These things all suggest strongly that the young widow must have had a desperate struggle to support her children. It was a bleak childhood for the Fisher boys – fatherless at an early age, deprived of school except for a bare minimum, obliged to work for pitifully small wages when other boys were at play or in school – and yet in later years O. W. was never known to complain about his tough luck nor his lack of opportunity.

Shortly after Peter's death and his own withdrawal from school, O. W. went to work in a sawmill at Pine Creek, in Scioto County.[5] This place was probably not far from Wheelersburg; very likely it was a crossroads point or the name of a rural community. The sawmill was a small portable outfit which could cut no more than three thousand feet of lumber per day. Any job around a sawmill is hard work, and just what the eight-year-old boy did is uncertain. He was strong and quite large for his age, but still it is not clear what regular work a small boy might have done there. He worked at such jobs as this and on farms and along the river, when he could find employment, for the next four years.

In 1854, O. W. was apprenticed to Uriah Nurse, who operated a grist mill in the vicinity. Here he learned the trade of miller, which for years he preferred to any other occupation. He remained with Nurse until 1857. Then fifteen, he went to Springville, a tiny village in the Kentucky Bluegrass country, and was employed for three years in a grist mill. Thereafter he returned to his home community and worked in the circular sawmill of A. MacManaway near Portsmouth.

In *1862*, O. W. decided to join his older brothers in the Union army, and on August *28* he went to Cincinnati and enlisted for three years, receiving a bounty of twenty-five dollars.[6] He was assigned to the Thirty-Ninth Ohio infantry regiment, and was mustered in on September *3*, one day after his twentieth birthday. The Thirty-Ninth had seen service in Missouri, but was transferred to General Grant's Army of the Tennessee, which had won great victories at Fort Donelson and Shiloh a few months earlier. In September, Grant was moving south with the ultimate objective of capturing Vicksburg, in order to reopen the Mississippi to commerce and cut the Confederacy in two.

This western army commanded by the "silent man from Galena" consisted predominantly of farm boys from the region between Ohio and Iowa. It lacked the spit-and-polish of the armies recruited and trained in the East. Professional soldiers were horrified at the lack of discipline, for these soldiers called out "Hi, captain" instead of saluting, and more than one general was profanely bawled out for venturing too near the front lines. They may have been pretty sloppy in appearance, but they were superb fighting men and they lost but one major battle.[7] They were resourceful, they were accustomed to outdoor life, and if necessary were able to live off the country as they marched. Nearly all were fine shots long before they donned uniforms. Few of them had deep convictions about negro slavery, but they were violently opposed to having the Union broken up. This was the kind of army in which O. W. served.

The Thirty-Ninth Ohio was stationed at Corinth, in Northeastern Mississippi, where it was part of General Rosecrans' command. His orders were to hold Corinth at all costs, for it was a rail center vital to the success of Grant's campaign. Early in September, Grant was obliged to weaken his forces by sending two brigades to General Buell who was in Kentucky opposing a big invasion army led by the Confederate General Bragg. At that juncture, General Price brought a rebel army over from Arkansas and occupied Iuka, only twenty-two miles southeast of Corinth, and General Van Dorn was moving up from the Southwest. Rosecrans was ordered by Grant to attack Iuka, and he did so on September 19 and gave Price a sufficient beating to compel the Confederates to retreat southward. Grant was pleased with the victory but was disappointed when Rosecrans did not pursue Price's defeated army. It was O. W.'s first battle, only sixteen days after being mustered in; however, the Thirty-Ninth Ohio was held in reserve and got into the fighting only briefly toward the end of the action.

Rosecrans' army returned to Corinth, but Price and Van Dorn joined forces under the command of the latter and attacked that strategic town on October 3. One of the bitterest battles of the war took place. Van Dorn had four men to Rosecrans' three, and he met with some success in the early part of the fight. The Confederates then tried to storm a battery called Robinett, in the left center of the Union line, but were repulsed with heavy losses. Rosecrans chose that moment to unleash his thunderbolt, and Stanley's brigade, which included the Thirty-Ninth Ohio, came up from its reserve position behind Robinett and made a furious bayonet charge which swept the Confederates from the field in great disorder and crowned the Union victory. Van Dorn lost nearly a quarter of his men, and his army was unable to resume the offensive for several months. Once more Grant was pleased with the victory, but he was furious when Rosecrans again delayed twenty-four hours before pursuing a demoralized foe. The two generals carried on a feud thereafter as long as they lived.

O. W. had been in the army just thirty days, yet he had taken part in two rugged battles. His participation at Iuka was probably rather nominal, but at Corinth he was in the outfit which struck the decisive blow.

It has been a tradition in the Fisher family that O. W. was captured at Corinth by General Nathan Bedford Forrest's men. That cannot be correct, as O. W. answered present at roll call for two and a half months after the battle. Moreover, Forrest's command was in Kentucky at the time of the battle, and it had no contact with the Thirty-Ninth Ohio until after mid-December. At that time, Forrest launched a raid from Central Tennessee to break up Grant's supply lines, and after taking Lexington, Tennessee, on December *16*, his troops captured a patrol from the Thirty-Ninth Ohio two days later at Kenton Station.[8] O. W. was in that patrol. The prisoners were taken to Trenton, Tennessee, and released on December *22*, after signing agreements not again to take up arms against the Confederacy.

When O. W. was missing, the adjutant of the Thirty-Ninth Ohio listed him as a deserter. This is not significant, as it was common practice in the Union army to so classify soldiers who disappeared when there was no battle. On December *27*, it was learned that he had been made a prisoner of war nine days earlier.

The army record is silent on O. W.'s whereabouts during the next two months, but between February *15* and *21*, *1863*, he reported at Camp Chase, Ohio, and there was a controversy over the validity of his parole. However, he was assigned to a special regiment of parolees who were given duties not inconsistent with the terms of their release. He was present at muster from mid-February until the end of May, and at that time he apparently was discharged although the army records in his case as well as in many others are sketchy and incomplete. Before midsummer he was again working in a grist mill in Portsmouth.

Nowadays, it would be said that O. W. Fisher had a terribly under-privileged boyhood. Doubtless he did have, but there is no evidence that he thought so. He did not make a habit of complaining over the privations and limitations that were his lot. It is quite possible that he did not realize until later years that he was denied a normal life in his youth. As a rule, the pioneers did not spend much time on self-pity. All of them, young and old alike, seemed to understand that hardships were the price that had to be paid for the establishment of homes in the wilderness.

iii

The Rolling Stone Adage Disproved

Had O. W. Fisher taken an inventory of his abilities and possessions when he reached man's estate on September *2*, *1863*, it might have been stated like this:

He was physically a giant, six feet two in height and weighing close to one-hundred ninety pounds. He was lithe and strong, and from early boyhood accustomed to hard work.

He was an experienced and skilled miller of flour; he was also competent in sawmill operation.

He had no financial resources other than meager savings.

He had little or no business experience.

His education had been limited to the "three R's".

He had the priceless qualities of integrity and honesty; in his whole life, nobody was ever to assert otherwise.

He had a driving ambition to make a success in life.

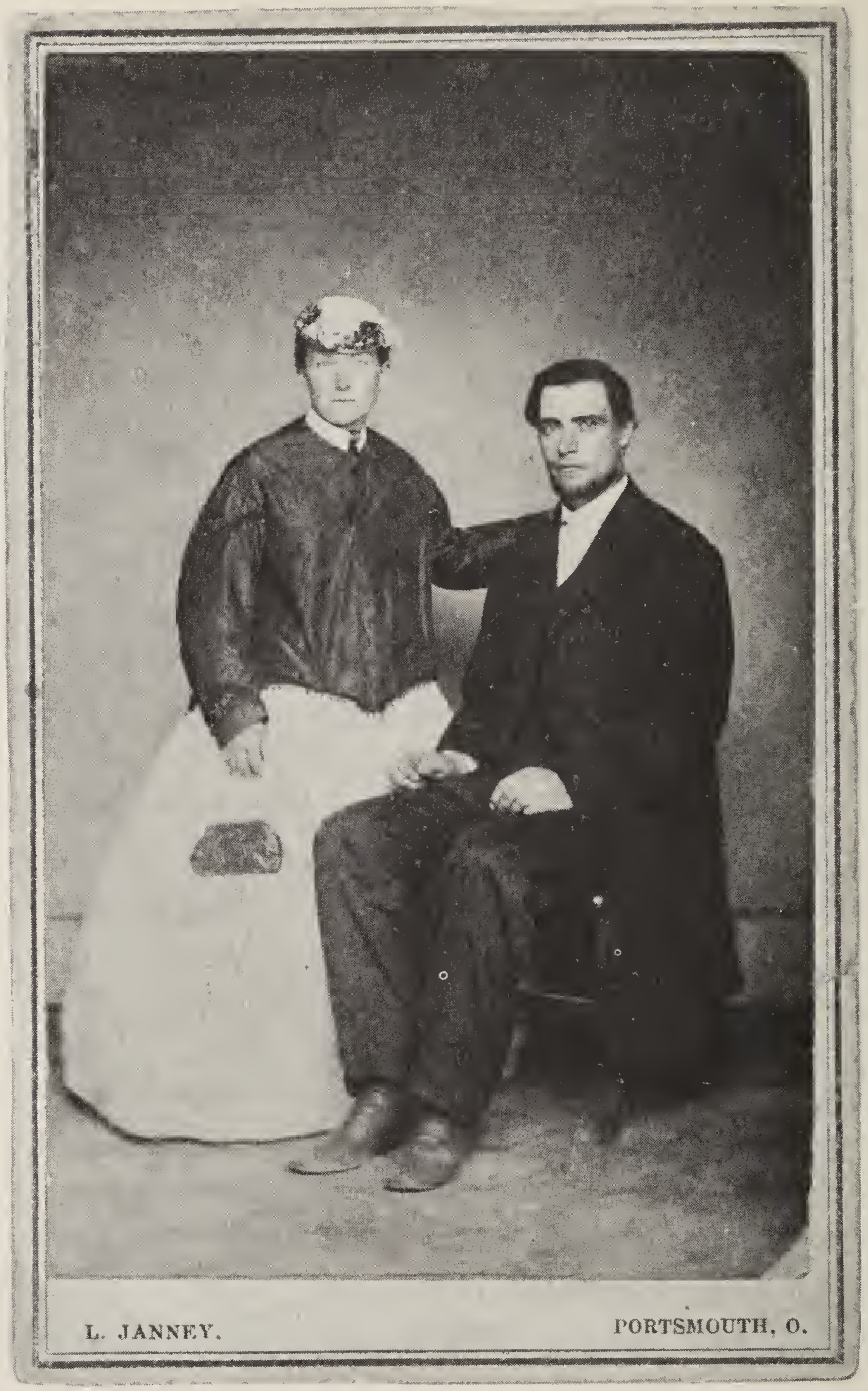
Prior to his army service, O. W.'s world had consisted of a short section of the Ohio River country and a small area in the Kentucky Bluegrass. Young men who worked for a living in those days had few opportunities to travel, and books describing regions beyond their horizons were scarce and costly. His army experience in Mississippi and Tennessee and his acquaintance with comrades from previously unknown areas undoubtedly aroused his curiosity about other parts of the United States. As he worked in the Portsmouth mill which converted farmers' wheat into flour he resolved that he would see some of the world–and at the same time try to discover the niche in life for which he was best adapted.

In the early spring of *1865*, O. W. set out for California. He travelled by railroad to St. Joseph, Missouri, and for the first time in his life, he saw Indiana, Illinois and Missouri –the state that later was to be his home for thirty years. St. Joseph was the outfitting point for most of the overland expeditions and the eastern terminus of the Pony Express, famed in legends of the West. Here he readily obtained a job as driver on a wagon train headed for the Golden State. The route bisected the great plains, followed the banks of the Platte for hundreds of miles, crossed the Continental Divide in what is now Wyoming, led down the mountains into Brigham Young's domain, traversed the blazing deserts of Nevada and went through the beautiful Sierras. The travellers braved hostile Sioux and Utes and Cheyennes, they were menaced by hordes of buffalo on wild rampages, and they were obliged to bury by the roadside some of their companions who could not withstand the rigors of the journey; but more than four months and two thousand miles out of St. Joseph, they arrived at the head of navigation on the Sacramento River. An incident of the trip was a joyful encounter between O. W. and his old employer, Uriah Nurse, who was also seeking his fortune in the West.

Spurning offers of work in the Comstock Lode, the wonder mine of that era, and deciding that prospecting on his own would be a wild gamble, O. W. took charge of a pack train of mules carrying ore from Virginia City, Nevada, to Marysville, California. It was a hazardous occupation. There were no roads worth the name. Trails over the mountains were treacherous and often dangerous, bandits lurked in hideaways, and the Sierras were impassable at times because of heavy snows. It was a rugged job, one which required courage as well as physical strength. But the pay was good. After some months, O. W. turned to herding horses in the foothills and mountain valleys between Marysville and Oroville. In the fall of *1866*, he decided to return to his home country. He went by stage coach to San Francisco, his first visit to that city and destined to be his last for thirty years.

O. W. embarked by steamer through the Golden Gate to San Juan del Sur, a port on the west coast of Central America; at that time, the route across Nicaragua to the Caribbean rivalled the Panama crossing in importance. It is believed that O. W. walked from San Juan del Sur to a point on Lake Nicaragua, thence went by steamboat the length of the lake, and again travelled on foot to the Caribbean. This could well have been true, as the distances, twenty-five and seventy-five miles, respectively, were not then considered too far to walk. At any rate, he boarded a freighter in San Juan del Norte (Greytown) for New York, and from New York he proceeded to London, Ontario, a city about halfway between Buffalo and Detroit.

One must speculate why O. W. went to London. Going from New York to Portsmouth via London is no more direct


L. JANNEY.
PORTSMOUTH, O.

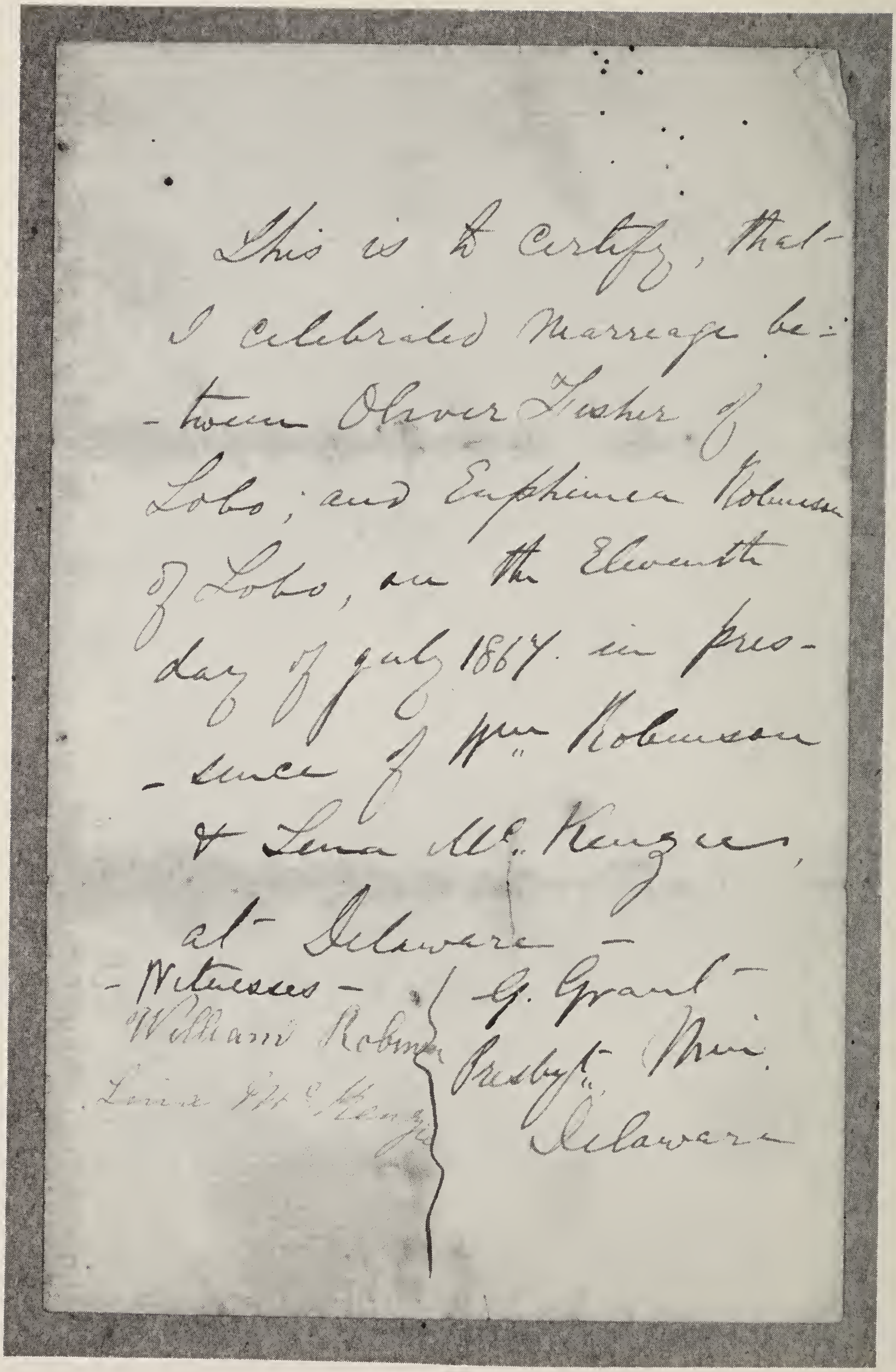
. . . Goldtype picture of the newlyweds
shows fashions of the 1860's . . .

than to go from Seattle to San Francisco via Salt Lake City. O. W.'s son Dan feels sure that his father once told him that he had a friend who was operating a grist mill near London, and this seems to be the most likely explanation. The London stopover nevertheless had profound consequences, for the wanderer met a girl in the vicinity who became his bride a few months later.

Euphemia Robinson was the girl. Her father was William Robinson, carpenter and cabinetmaker by trade, although there are reasons for believing that he may have been operating a hotel in a small village near London at that particular time. He was a short, stocky man, no more than five feet four. Of Irish birth, he had left Ireland in his youth because his father had been killed by the Sinn Feiners during one of the numerous Irish rebellions. Little is known about Euphemia's mother, who apparently was no longer living at that time; there were seven children in the Robinson family, Euphemia being the eldest. Her birthplace was at Komoka, a village near London.

Many years later, Euphemia told one of her granddaughters-in-law that she first saw O. W. when he entered the dining room of the village hotel and she thought how handsome and tremendously tall he was. In turn, O. W. had noticed the pert Irish lass, and each was wondering how an introduction could be managed. It evidently was managed, as it usually seems to be in such cases. On July 11, 1867, O. W. and Euphemia were married at Delaware, Ontario, the ceremony being solemnized by Reverend G. Grant, pastor of the Presbyterian Church. He was then almost twenty-five; she a few months past twenty.

The goldtype picture of the newlyweds shows the fashions of the 1860's.[1] It also shows Euphemia to be very short, and in fact she was no more than five feet in height. At that



This is to certify, that I celebrated Marriage between Oliver Fisher of Lobo; and Euphemia Robinson of Lobo, on the Eleventh day of July 1867. in presence of Wm Robinson & Lena McKenzie, at Delaware –

– Witnesses –
William Robin
Lena McKenzie

G. Grant –
Presbyt. Min.
Delaware

. . . home of the young couple is given on wedding certificate as Lobo, Ontario . . .

time, O. W. affected a beard distinctly unlike the Van Dyke which he wore for many years afterward.

The home of the young couple is given on the wedding certificate as Lobo, Ontario. It is known, however, that O. W. had then been employed for several months in a grist mill at Komoka, and the Robinson home was at Delaware. These Ontario villages, each of which had a population of perhaps two hundred, were all about a dozen miles out of London. They stand approximately in line, Delaware being the southernmost, Komoka next and Lobo to the north, perhaps three miles apart. A few miles beyond Lobo are Hyde Park Corners and Longwood, similar places about which we shall hear presently.

O. W. and Euphemia moved with confusing frequency during the first ten years of their marriage. They were at Lobo a few months as he worked in the Komoka mill, then they left Ontario for Portsmouth, Ohio, for a few months and again he was gristing flour, but in *1868* he was back in Ontario operating a mill at Longwood under lease. He ran a small hotel at Hyde Park Corners for a short time, probably simultaneously with the Longwood venture. By early *1869*, he was running the grist mill at Springville, Kentucky, in which he had worked a decade before, but within a few months the young Fishers had moved to a rural community outside Louisville. They lived there more than two years, O. W. being manager of a sawmill owned by his cousin, Luke Dodge. It was while they were in this area that their first child was born on June *5*, *1869* – a son, William Peter, named in honor of his grandfathers.

O. W. was a tremendous worker. He combined great physical strength with almost unlimited energy. He drove himself constantly. He went into the woods with the crew and set the pace for rough and tough loggers. At the sawmill, he rolled big logs with seemingly little effort. The amount he accomplished was astonishing. Small wonder, then, that his enterprises did well.

From Kentucky the Fishers went to Missouri, probably late in 1871, and O. W. purchased the general store at the hamlet of Orleans, Polk County, and stocked it with goods. Within a very short time, they returned to the Louisville area, but their second son – christened Andrew James – was born at Orleans on February 7, 1872. However, little William Peter called the baby Burr, a corruption of "brother", and the nickname stuck. Some years later, Burr was made the legal name.

What took the family back to Kentucky was an attractive wood contract which O. W. obtained from the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, but it was cancelled during the financial panic of 1873. At that juncture, they returned to Ontario, where he again ran the Longwood grist mill, this time for more than a year. Once more they went to Kentucky, O. W. having purchased forty acres of standing timber from which he sold the wood. The next move took them to Missouri again, and he repurchased the Orleans store and also became postmaster. Here they stayed put for almost two years, during which time another son, Oliver David, came into the world on November 29, 1875.[2]

Missouri had about a million and three-quarters people in the 1870's – less than half the present total. Almost one-fifth of them lived in St. Louis, which was the only city of much consequence. Kansas City then had but thirty-two thousand population, St. Joseph nineteen thousand and there were no other towns above six thousand. No less than ninety per cent of the people outside St. Louis lived on the land.[3]

The magnet which drew O. W. and Euphemia to Missouri was the fact that his brother Dan had been living in Polk

County for several years, and some distance away but in the same county there also lived his sister, Sarah Jeanette, who was married to Braxton Cox. The brothers had opposed the marriage, chiefly because he had been a Confederate while they were Union men, and the feelings between the men were by no means cordial. There nevertheless was genuine affection between O. W. and his sister, so much so that the latter named her oldest daughter Euphemia, in honor of O. W.'s wife.

Polk County is about one hundred and twenty-five miles southeast of Kansas City and forty miles or so north of Springfield. It was covered with trees when the first settlers arrived in the *1830*'s – timber that a lumberman would scorn as "scrub". The trees were not large and used chiefly for fuel, posts, rough lumber and railroad ties. By the *1870*'s, there were a good many small farms in the county, although a large share of the land was still tree-covered. The soil was by no means as fertile as in the prairie lands to the north but superior to the rough hills of the Ozarks. It had been a region of divided loyalties during the Civil War, and although no battles were fought within its borders there had been a reign of terror throughout because of bush-whacking raids by armed bands of partisans.[4]

Orleans is not to be found on modern maps, as it ceased to exist at least sixty years ago.[5] It was on the Little Soc River, about twelve miles southwest of Bolivar. It was one of the earliest settlements in that part of the state, but like thousands of other hamlets which were passed by when the railroads came it withered and disappeared. Even in its heyday, it had only a grist mill, blacksmith shop and general store, but it was a trading point of importance to the surrounding rural community.

Some time in *1877*, O. W. disposed of the Orleans store and acquired a combination sawmill and grist mill at Humansville,[6] also in Polk County. He operated this establishment more than four years, usually running the grist mill three days each week and the sawmill an equal amount of time. In this way, he kept both busy, although he often worked very long hours. His older sons have related to their children that O. W. was accustomed to sleep beside the flour mill when it was operating at night, being awakened by the difference in sound when the grist had run through.

The Fisher family was destined to live at Humansville almost all of the ensuing two decades. At first they occupied a house alongside the grist mill and sawmill. These properties O. W. had purchased on four years' credit, but he paid for them in two. During this interim, their fourth son was born on July 6, 1878, and was named Daniel Robinson. Two and a half years later, their longing for a daughter was fulfilled; Lula Christina was born on January 18, 1881. A second daughter, Zoe Edith, was born in 1884 but died in infancy.

Late in 1881, O. W. sold or traded his Humansville holdings for a larger flour mill at Bolivar, the seat of Polk County, and he then had his first experience operating a merchant mill.[7] By the end of 1882, he had sold the Bolivar business and returned to Humansville, where he acquired a half-interest in the general store of Barnett and Paxton. At that time, he also erected the house in Humansville which the family occupied for the next fourteen years. It was one of the two or three largest and most imposing homes in the town, and for many years was known locally as the "old Fisher homestead."[8]

It is well at this point to retrace O. W.'s progress upward. At the time of his marriage and for several years after, he was working for wages. Then he began to rent small establishments, and finally he arrived at the ownership level. Although the number of dollars which passed through his hands was not tremendous, there is reason to believe that a small part of nearly every one remained in his possession. His capital grew slowly, perhaps too slowly for a man with his ambition and energy, but gradually he was able to move on to slightly larger businesses. This is shown by his progress from a small store to the combined custom sawmill and grist mill and thence to the small merchant mill at Bolivar. It is also evidenced by the upgrading of his home, for the house built in *1882* bore the distinct mark of modest financial success on the part of the owner, at least for a little Missouri town. His net worth when he left Bolivar could not have been more than a few thousand dollars, but in the *1880*'s such a sum was not insignificant for a young man in that area.

O. W. had just turned forty when the family returned to Humansville. He and Euphemia had moved no less than fifteen times in as many years. They had lived in three states and a Canadian province. He had gone from flour milling to sawing lumber and back again several times, with short forays into keeping store and running a hotel. If ever there was a rolling stone, he was one, but even in those days he was beginning to disprove the adage that such an object has a low rating as a collector of moss. He had made a good living for the times; he had accumulated a small amount of capital; he had acquired considerable business experience; he had established a reputation for acumen and ability; and each new step had been upward on the ladder of success.

What Euphemia, surrounded by four sturdy sons and a baby daughter, thought about all the moving from place to place, the constant shifting from one business to another, the pulling up of roots almost before they were down, is not recorded. She was perfectly capable of speaking her mind on any question that concerned her, as her descendants who knew her can testify; but she also belonged to the school which believed that it was the husband's responsibility to make the living and run the business and the wife's to manage the home. It may be, therefore, that she only marvelled at the restless, driving energy of the man whose name she was proud to bear and went along with him in full confidence that he knew what he was about.

iv

Affluence Despite Hard Times

Enumerators for the U. S. Census Bureau found three hundred and seventy-two persons in Humansville in *1880*.[1] In most respects, it was a typical mid-western village, almost wholly dependent upon the farming industry of its hinterland.

This town just west of the Missouri Ozarks was O. W. Fisher's base of operations for almost twenty years. There he was in business, and there he returned after the year in Bolivar. There he became president of the town's only bank and part owner of the principal store, but his main activities came to be located elsewhere even though his home was at Humansville. There the young Fishers attended school and spent their happy childhood years.

It was here that O. W. became associated with John Briggs Barnett, the most well-to-do resident of Humansville in that era. The scion of an old Kentucky family, he had emigrated to Missouri in the fateful year *1860*. Throughout the Civil War, he was a member of the Missouri militia and he took part in one formal battle; but his most hazardous service was tracking down ruffians and guerrillas whose specialty was murdering civilians in their homes far from the scene of conflict. He engaged in the mercantile business in Humansville after the war, was county judge[2] for four years, gradually acquired property and in time became a village capitalist of a sort. He left the management of the concerns in which he was interested largely to others, and participated in business primarily as an investor. The sums he invested would in most cases be regarded today as rather minor, but they were important money in rural Missouri eighty years ago.

A firm friendship developed between O. W. Fisher and Judge Barnett, beginning about *1877*, and it continued without breach for forty-five years. They liked each other, they admired each other's sagacity and business judgment and they trusted each other implicitly. In *1880*, they organized the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank and thus gave Humansville its first financial institution. Before that time, any person in the community who needed banking services was obliged to go to Bolivar, twenty miles and a full day's journey away. Very few did so, of course, and most people kept currency in the teapot or some other hideaway.

The Farmers' and Merchants' Bank was hardly a financial house of the first rank, as it had a capital of only five thousand dollars, but it was destined to build up a surplus of four times that amount. O. W. was president, and for a few years Barnett was cashier and the only employee. O. W. had neither training nor inclination for book work, and his services to the little bank were mainly along two lines: He passed on loans, and as he went about the community he urged people to deposit their funds instead of carrying or hiding them. This missionary work was slow in producing results, as most people in that area had never before even been inside a bank. After a few years, Barnett was elected probate judge[3] and withdrew from bank work. This was the first of a considerable list of business enterprises in which the two men were allied.

During the early and middle *1880*'s, O. W. bought cattle and hogs from farmers in the community and made shipments to the central markets. It was not a fulltime occupation, but he engaged in it somewhat intermittently until his lumber business required his entire attention. His sons also made occasional ventures into livestock shipping.

It is almost impossible for members of the present generation to realize how important the railroads were in the era under consideration. To do so it would be necessary to visualize a condition in which there were no automobiles, no trucks, no airplanes, no telephones, no radio or television, no daily mail delivery except in the cities, and no hard surfaced roads. Railroads were then almost the only means of commerce and travel. They brought in all goods and supplies not produced in a community, they carried all commodities to market. At a time when horseback was practically the only alternative means of travel, it was a poor railroad line which did not have four local passenger trains each way per day and some had six besides "flyers" or limiteds.

Railroading was the biggest business of the nation and outside the cities it was usually the only business of a sizable nature. Even in small cities, the station agent was a person of consequence in a community, while in villages like Humansville he rated fully as high as a bank president or a church deacon.

Small though his business was at that time, O. W. had gained an understanding of the vital relationships of railroads to the economy of the nation, and it was natural for him to cultivate an acquaintance with railroad men. Starting with the station agent, he progressed to the district superintendent and some of the higher officials of the Kansas City, Fort Scott and Memphis Railroad (now part of the Frisco system), a branch of which ran through Humansville.

What O. W. had in mind was to obtain a slice of the bridge timber and tie business of the railroad. Polk County had a great acreage of hardwood timber suitable for these purposes, and in Humansville a man named H. H. Smalley had been selling the railroad these products for several years. He was agreeable to entering into partnership with O. W. and the inevitable Barnett; each of them had assets of value – O. W. had railroad connections and sawmill experience, Smalley had a tie plant and Barnett supplied capital. The firm of Fisher, Barnett and Smalley was formed about 1885. Smalley bought the logs and produced the timbers, O. W. did the selling. Before long they were marketing substantial quantities of oak and other hardwood to the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis Railroad and in the process they were bringing a good bit of cash into the community. This enterprise operated two or three years, and then larger vistas began opening up for the future.

The railroad timber business brought O. W. into contact with General George H. Nettleton, president of the railroad, and from Nettleton he learned about lumber companies farther east in the Ozarks which were prospering. As he explored the country along the Current River branch of the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis Railroad, in the hills about a hundred miles east of Springfield, O. W. found sizable tracts of yellow pine forest which had scarcely been touched. Only one really large lumber company was then operating in that part of the state, the Missouri Lumber & Mining Company at Grandin. A large share of the lumber used in such states as Missouri and Kansas was coming from Wisconsin, and O. W. could see no reason why a part of this trade could not be supplied by the forests of his home state.

At Winona, Shannon County, there was a considerable acreage of yellow pine to be had, and O. W. joined with Charles C. Goodlander, proprietor of a flour mill in Fort Scott, Kansas, and Joseph Fisher[4], a lumberman from Springfield, in organizing the Ozark Land & Timber Company. This was in *1887*, and in due course this company built a sawmill and put it into operation. It was O. W.'s first experience of consequence in lumber production, beginning with the standing trees and carrying through to the sale of the finished product. He was a director and officer of the company, and he had a hand in its management.

Ozark was doing well and was finding a market for its Missouri yellow pine lumber despite the belief on the part of many lumberyard operators that all good lumber came from Wisconsin white pines, but in the process of its operation O. W. ran across a deal which seemed to him to have greater promise. Ten miles west of Winona in the village of Birch Tree, there was a struggling lumber concern run by the Cordz Brothers. They were experienced and competent sawmill operators, but were in trouble. This was partly due to lack of capital and partly to the fact that they were better sawmill operators than they were business men. Moreover, there were two goodsized tracts of yellow pine forest near Birch Tree which would provide raw material for many years, and O. W. learned that one of them was owned by a trust company affiliated with the railroad and was for sale at an attractive price. The Cordz' were unable to swing a deal of that size.

The result was that O. W. and the Cordz Brothers joined forces and formed the Cordz-Fisher Lumber Company in *1889*. The Cordz family had a half interest, and the remainder was divided equally between J. B. Barnett and O. W. Henry Cordz remained as president and sawmill superintendent, O. W. became secretary-treasurer and general manager. The first steps were the renovation of the sawmill, the building of a planing mill, the purchase of thirty-seven thousand acres of yellow pine, and construction of a logging railroad. Cordz-Fisher was then really in business, and it speedily became one of the best known lumber companies in Missouri. In the course of this venture, O. W. sold most of his Ozark interest to Joseph Fisher, although he continued as a minor stockholder and director.

It is significant that in putting together Cordz-Fisher, O. W. employed none of the tactics which then were common and regarded as ethical in dealing with a group that was in trouble. He made no attempt to squeeze out the Cordz family, although it is apparent that he was in position to do so. Their interest was carefully preserved, and all of the four brothers had posts of consequence with the company throughout its history and they shared in the company's success. O. W. and the Cordz brothers were close friends as long as they lived, and there are Cordz holdings to this day in other Fisher enterprises.

Cordz-Fisher was a great success. It began producing and marketing lumber early in the *1890*'s, and when its holdings were cut out some fourteen years later it had returned to its owners their original investment a respectable number of times. If one may be permitted to look seventy years ahead into the twentieth century for an illustration which admirably describes what this Ozarkian concern did for the Fishers, it may be said that Cordz-Fisher was the first stage of their financial rocket. Carrying the illustration farther, O. W's varied business experience and his success in such other enterprises as the succession of grist mills and sawmills, the bank and the railroad timber business might be regarded as the launching pad which made it possible to send the rocket aloft. It would not be long before the second and third stages appeared and then the craft would be in orbit.

Throughout the first ten years of Cordz-Fisher history, O. W.'s principal place of business was Birch Tree. As a rule, he spent several days there each week. There was no phase of company operation with which he was not familiar by virtue of experience – he could have directed the woods crew or the log-haulers or run the sawmill, had that been necessary. It was rare, however, that he had to concern himself about any production aspects, for the Cordz men had these areas of work well in hand. The consequence was that O. W. was largely occupied with finances and general management, and with selling lumber. He travelled over Western Missouri, Kansas and parts of Oklahoma calling on lumber yards, and he built up most of the Cordz-Fisher outlets in this way.

Although O. W.'s business world centered at Birch Tree, he and Euphemia continued to have their home in Humansville[5] until September *1896*. Their family was complete with the birth on January *8, 1891,* of a fifth son, Orin Wallace. He was called O. W., Jr., without any given name, until he was five or six, and then he selected his own name to fit the initials. When O. W.'s sister, Sarah Jeanette Cox, died in *1882,* her daughters Agnes and Alice came to live with the Fishers, despite the protests of their father. Agnes remained only a short time, but Alice was a member of the family for a number of years and later lived with some of the other

*. . . he and Euphemia continued to have
their home in Humansville until September 1896 . . .*

Fishers. She was approximately the same age as Lula, and they grew up as sisters.

Even before this period, the Fishers had been regarded as solid and substantial citizens and among the leading people in the village and community. O. W. now reached a level of material success which had not been attained by anyone else around Humansville except his bosom friend and business partner, Judge Barnett. The Fisher home was one of the show places of the town. It had four bedrooms upstairs and one down, it had the front and back parlors that were regarded as indispensable in those days, and it had the first bathroom in the entire area. Most important of all, it was a true home and not just a great house in which some well-to-do people ate and slept.

The Fisher home was pleasant and comfortable rather than elaborate and luxurious. It did not have period furniture and oriental rugs, but the children were encouraged to bring their friends in for play or visit. It was frequently the locale for parties for young people, and there were often adult social gatherings as well.

O. W. and Euphemia were regular in their attendance at Methodist Church services, and the children went to Sunday School and Epworth League. It is not quite clear how the Fishers got into the Methodist fold, as Euphemia was brought up in the Presbyterian faith and it is believed that O. W. may also have been. The theory that when they reached Humansville they had their choice between being Baptists or Methodists, and that Methodist doctrine was much nearer Presbyterian beliefs, does not explain the situation, as they had Methodist affiliations some years before they lived in Missouri. Euphemia sparked their attendance at divine services, not by any means an unusual thing for a wife to do, but she rarely went unescorted unless O. W. was away from home.

If we had had the opportunity of visiting the Fisher household early in *1891*, soon after the birth of baby Wallace, we would have met a genuine American family with an income far above the general level in that area, but with few evidences of affluence except a much better home than the average.

At forty-eight, O. W. had all the appearance of a patriarch. He was distinguished by a black Van Dyke beard, and he tipped the scales above two hundred pounds. He was physically strong and active, but through the years he had developed a restless mental intensity. He was rarely talkative, but inclined to be reflective and a good listener. He was a member of the Masonic Order and of the G.A.R. He was away from home a large share of the time, and although he was immersed in business problems he took an active interest in what his children were doing. He read the daily papers regularly, but not much else. His language tended to be ungrammatical, and although he wrote a good hand he did not relish desk work of any kind. He teased and needled Euphemia a great deal, apparently for amusement, for he rarely interfered with her management of the household and children. He was a cigar smoker and he chewed tobacco constantly. He was not averse to having a drink, but in deference to Euphemia's views he did not have liquor in the house. He was regarded by nearly everyone but his closest associates as being distant and austere. He was strong-minded and positive, he had become a leader among men and he had that indefinable quality called sound business judgment. He was a homespun success.

Euphemia, four years younger than her husband, was quick, talkative and witty. She ran her household with a deftness that softened its firmness. She was quite religious, but not self-righteous; she took a leading part in all church affairs. She was definitely opposed to liquor and playing cards. She nursed the sick all over the town and she helped people who were in trouble through no fault of their own. She had probably finished a common school course, and she joined her husband in insisting that the children should receive educational privileges not available to their parents. She had something of an ear for music. She was a self-reliant little person, as strong-willed as O.W., and there were few situations with which she was not competent to cope.

O. W. and Euphemia did not commit the error common to many parents who had risen from humble circumstances to wealth. Although they were determined that their children should not be obliged to suffer the hard knocks and bitter experiences of their own youthful years, they were equally determined not to spoil them. The sons who worked for O. W.'s companies were paid the same wages as anyone else who might have held the same jobs, they were subject to the same discipline as other employes and their promotions were earned and not handed them on a platter proudly presented by papa. Nor were the sons set up in business on dad's money – they made their own way. They were given opportunities and guidance, but not much else.

The oldest son, William Peter, was then twenty-one. He was just above five feet six, and was of medium build. His forehead hairline was receding and it was not many years before he became bald. Known throughout his boyhood as Willy, he was then adopting Will P. as his signature. He had worked a little in his father's grist mill as a boy, he had been timekeeper at Ozark and clerked in the company store at Birch Tree. He had completed a common school course and then had two years in the preparatory school of the University of Missouri.[6] He was not strong physically.

Will P. tended to be religious, was a kindly, thoughtful and considerate young man who withal manifested a violent temper on occasion.

Burr was nineteen and quite heavy for his five feet six. He was affable and agreeable and has been called the peacemaker in the family. He also had finished the common schools and had one year in the university's preparatory department. He had worked during vacations in the railroad office and was then clerking in the Barnett and Paxton store. Neither he nor Will P. seemed to care much for their father's lumber business, and the brothers were thinking about going into general store operation. Burr had musical ability, notably with the cornet.

The third son, Oliver David, usually known as Ollie, was fifteen and was attending Drury College in Springfield preparatory to enrolling the following August at Virginia Military Institute. He had just been graduated from Humansville High School in its first class, for which he was valedictorian. He was precocious and industrious; at the age of ten, he had begun working on the books in his father's bank and the next year he had taken full charge for a day in an emergency. At thirteen, he grew twenty acres of corn. The same height as his brothers, Ollie was slender.

The only one of the sons to resemble his father physically was Daniel Robinson, then twelve. Dan was to reach five feet eleven, nearly five inches above his brothers although three inches less than his giant parent. He was the only athlete in the family, and he had great natural musical talent. It was said, "Burr can play the cornet, Dan can play anything." He was then attending school in Humansville.

Lula and Alice Cox were little girls of ten, playing with their dolls and acting as nursemaids for Lula's baby brother Wallace. Lula was already beginning to demonstrate superior qualities as a student, and she also had musical talent.

At this point, O. W. and Euphemia were on the threshold of the time when their family would begin to scatter. O. W. dreaded the day, for he wanted to keep his sons around him. This was no doubt a reflex from his own childhood experiences and the abnormally early dispersal of his brothers and himself from his mother's home. There was a broad patriarchal streak in O.W., which was to manifest itself repeatedly in the future, but in this instance he did not oppose Will P. and Burr going out on their own. It was his sense of realism asserting itself, for he knew that sooner or later his sons would spread their wings and try to fly. Hard shelled as he seemed to many to be, nevertheless he broke down and cried when the boys left home.

Colorado was the magnet which attracted the young men, and there they went to seek their fortune as merchants. Will P. was the first to go and he was soon followed by Burr. Will P. opened a small general store at Alamosa in the fall of 1891, but after six or eight months he went to Salida where he had a similar establishment for about the same period of time. During 1892, Burr worked in Thomas M. Callahan's store at Longmont, and in the spring of 1893 the brothers joined forces and launched a store in Boulder, the home of the University of Colorado. It seems certain that their entry into storekeeping was greatly influenced by Callahan, and it is probable that he may have guided them to some extent.

Tom Callahan was a travelling photographer who went from door to door. He had come to Humansville a few years earlier, and in due course he had married Alice Barnett, daughter of O. W.'s valued friend. Tom and Alice continued to travel as he plied his trade, but eventually he bought a store in Colorado in order to get off the road. He called it the Golden Rule Store. It is quite probable that the name was not original with him, that there had been other Golden Rule Stores just as there had been Ideal Restaurants and Corner Drug Stores, but he was the first to do an effective job of capitalizing on this name. His accounts of the prosperity that was coming his way caused several other Humansville young bloods to set themselves up as storekeepers.

Among them were Andy Murphy, husband of Emma Barnett, who had clerked for Barnett & Paxton for seven years and then run a shoe store for three before being elected assessor. He went to Bozeman, Montana. Another was Charley Ramsay, whose wife had been Hattie Barnett; he located at Greeley, Colorado. Still others were Henry Stevens, whose establishment was at Sheridan, Wyoming, and Billy Hall, who settled at Gardiner, Montana. Then there was Charles E. Dimmitt, son of the Methodist preacher who had baptized the Fisher children. He gave up running the lumberyard at Humansville and went to Great Falls, Montana; a quarter of a century later he became general manager of the great Penney chain.

The Golden Rule Stores were individually owned and operated. At first, they had only a sentimental connection, stemming from the fact that their proprietors had hailed from Humansville and because they had all borrowed Callahan's Golden Rule name and orange store front. Later, most of them were to do their buying together. The Golden Rule Stores were the *1890* version of present-day Penney stores, stocked with moderate-priced goods of respectable quality – mainly items which turned over quickly.[7]

Just before he left for Colorado, Will P. was married. In the summer of *1891*, he was very ill at Birch Tree with typhoid fever and Euphemia was nursing him. One day he said to her, "Ma, I want you to tell Estelle Meeker that I'm going to die if she doesn't agree to marry me." To his mother's reply that he didn't even know Estelle, the young man retorted, "Well, I've seen her, and anyway I know her mother!"

The recipient of this unorthodox proposal was the daughter of Captain Edwin I. Meeker, who kept the Cordz-Fisher books. The captain had wandered over most of the West before coming to Birch Tree. The G.A.R. was his avocation and he faithfully attended every reunion, reliving the great adventure of his life. His eighteen-year-old daughter may have been startled over the proposal, but on September *17, 1891,* she and Will P. were married. A year later when their first son, David Meeker arrived, the young mother returned to Birch Tree for the occasion. O. W. and Euphemia were grandparents for the first time.

It was not long before Burr followed his brother's example. His bride was Jennie Lee Barnett, youngest of the judge's five daughters. He thus became a brother-in-law of Andy Murphy, Tom Callahan and Charley Ramsay. This wedding took place on February *8, 1893,* one day after Burr's majority.

Meanwhile, Ollie had become a cadet at Virginia Military Institute. He had no idea of following a military career, although he had previously tried to enter West Point. What he wanted was engineering training, but after two years at Lexington where he made excellent grades in competition with older cadets he elected to go to work. On August *1, 1893,* he reported to J. A. Merryweather, chief engineer for Cordz-Fisher, and became the compass and transit man on the logging railroad. Thereafter he was timekeeper and storekeeper at the Pine Hollow camp a few miles out of Birch Tree. It was not long before he moved into the purchasing end, at first for the two Cordz-Fisher stores and then for the lumber company as well. Henry Cordz once needed some new sawmill equipment, and the supplier who called expressed astonishment at being turned over to the undersized youngster. "That's all right," rejoined Henry, "Ollie may be only eighteen, but he's had forty-five years' experience!"

When Dan reached high school age in *1892*, his parents decided to send him to the preparatory school of the University of Colorado. After a year, he transferred to Wentworth Military Academy, Lexington, Missouri. The young cadet became a baseball and football player of note, and was drillmaster of the Wentworth band. When the *1895* football team completed its schedule undefeated, a postseason contest was arranged with the University of Missouri. Although Dan was running a high temperature and had been forbidden by his father to play, the academy commandant yielded to the persuasion of the town sports and put him in the game. The academy lost, of course, but Dan's play was the sensation of the day and drew headlines in the St. Louis papers. O. W. read the papers, called Dan home and gave the commandant a dressing down such as the latter had probably never handed out to his most unruly cadet. Dan's hearing was permanently impaired as a result of the adventure.

O. W. had long wanted a more central location for his expanding activities, and in the fall of *1896* the family moved to a large house on St. Louis Street in Springfield.[8] Lula was then in high school, and Wallace had just reached school age. He remembers wearing a gold-banded cap in the exciting McKinley-Bryan campaign of that year. Several years earlier, Euphemia had suffered a broken kneecap in a fall at home, and she was thereafter a cripple to the end of her days. It did not prevent her from getting around handily, through the help of either a cane or a crutch, but from time to time she had the misfortune of breaking it again and spending another long period in bed.

At the time of the move to Springfield, O. W. was doubtless rated as a rich man. He had a substantial amount of property, and through his associations with others he controlled a great deal more. He was, indeed, a rich man for the Ozark country of the *1890*'s. Nevertheless, he was beginning to look for new worlds to conquer. The most unusual feature about his wealth and property was that it was accumulated during a period when business as a whole was anything but flourishing in the United States. In fact, the most severe depression up to that time had occurred during the first half of the *1890* decade, yet that was when O. W. was making his greatest financial progress.

V

The Springfield Years

The O. W. Fishers lived in Springfield for eight happy years. They had reached middle age. Their older sons were established in business and doing well. The number of grandchildren grew to a half dozen. Wallace grew from a little boy to his middle teens. During this time, O. W.'s business empire expanded first to Louisiana and then to Montana. The family was prosperous.

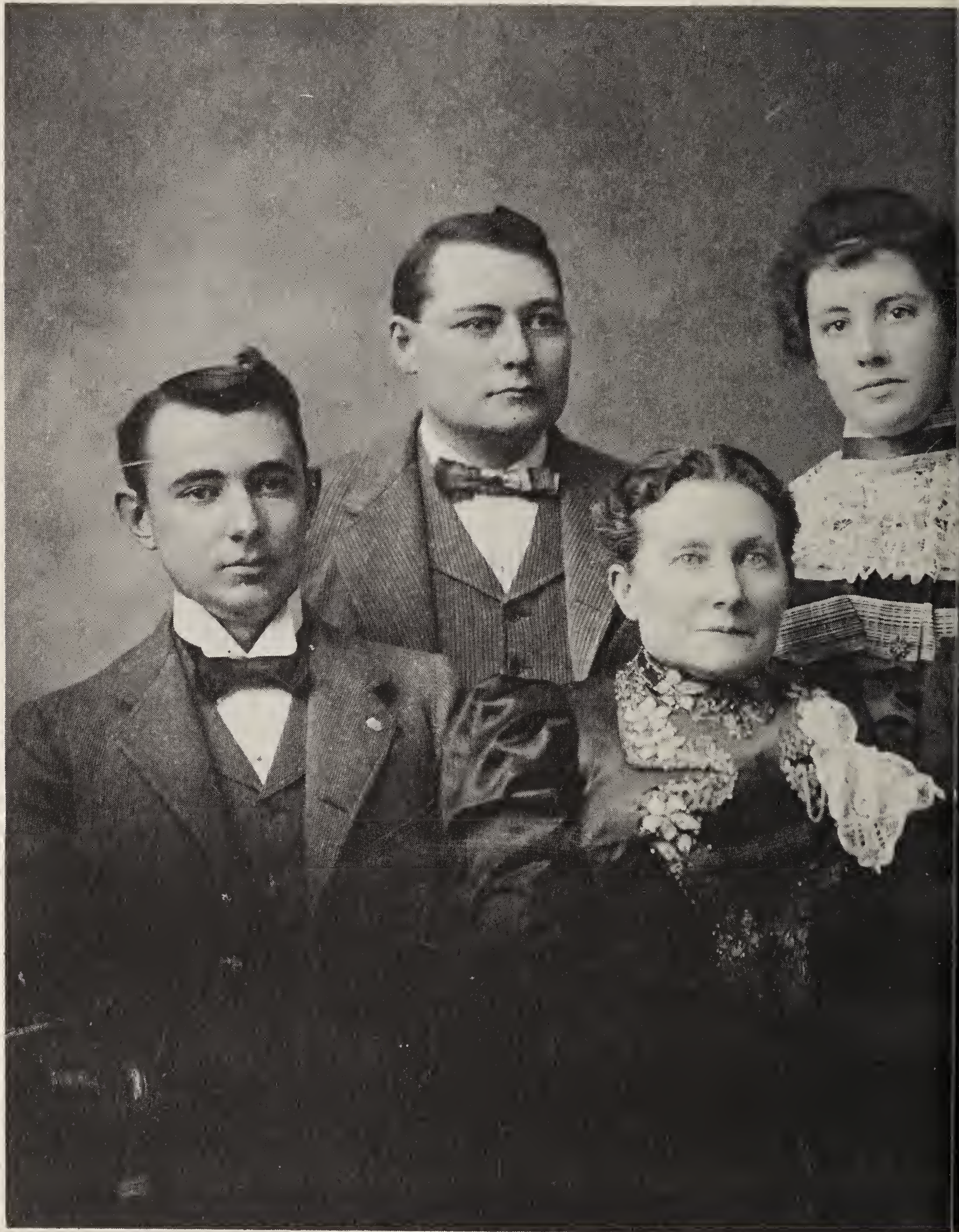
Springfield, with a population of about twenty-two thousand, hardly rated as a great metropolitan center. It was a pleasant, friendly town which was the distribution point for nearly all of the southwest quarter of the state. It was called the Queen City of the Ozarks, although geologists agree that it is not located within the limits of the Ozark plateau.

Springfield is near the eastern edge of the great plains which have few interruptions as they sweep westward for hundreds of miles across and beyond Kansas.

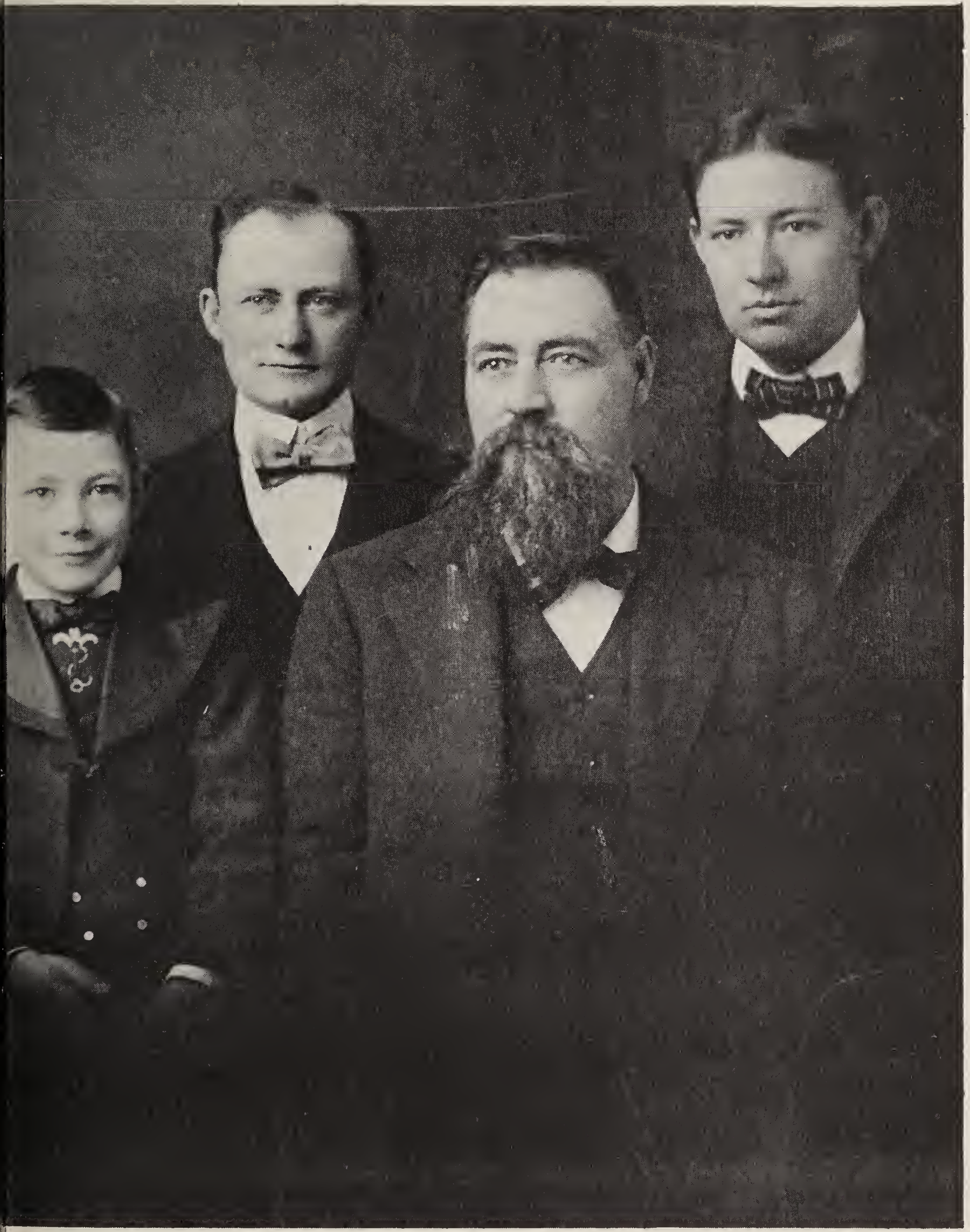
Long before they became Springfield residents, the Fishers had known the little city, partly through O. W.'s business contacts and partly because it was a trading center which they had visited with some regularity. They had no difficulty in establishing themselves in church and business circles. It was not long before Euphemia could say, "It's just like Humansville, only bigger." Springfield might not appreciate such a compliment, no matter how well intended, but to a certain degree the statement was true.

At the time of the Springfield move, O. W.'s primary business was the management of Cordz-Fisher Lumber Company. In *1897*, he anticipated the approaching exhaustion of the forest tract north of Birch Tree by purchasing from Joseph Fisher twenty-six thousand acres of excellent yellow pine south of the village, but he was also exploring in other areas with an eye on the future. Several years earlier *(1892)*, he had found a less burdensome way to sell Cordz-Fisher lumber than to do it himself. He joined with two neighboring lumbermen in creating a joint sales agency which took over the marketing of lumber for all three. This was at first a partnership known as the Missouri Lumber & Exchange Company, but it was converted into a corporation in *1898*. The name was later changed to Exchange Sawmill Sales Company and it is still in business.

The leader in establishing the joint sales agency was J. B. White, manager of the Missouri Lumber & Mining Company at Grandin, fifty miles or so southeast of Birch Tree. This was the first large lumber enterprise in the Ozarks, and it had been operating successfully since *1880*. It was about twice the size of Cordz-Fisher. It is probable that O. W.



. . . Oliver David . . . Burr . . . Euphemia . . . Lula Christina . .



in Wallace . . . William Peter . . . O. W. . . . Daniel Robinson . . .

and White had been acquainted since about 1887, when Ozark Land & Lumber Company had begun operations. At any rate, they had been neighbors and friendly competitors for some years. The third member of the partnership was J. H. Berkshire, who was managing Ozark in the 1890's. The success of the new venture is indicated by the fact that by 1898 it was acting for five companies in addition to the original triumvirate.

John Barber White was one of the great figures in the American lumber industry. Born in upstate New York, he was descended from a long line of lumbermen – an ancestor built a sawmill at Salem, Massachusetts in 1638, and his father was a sawmill operator in Western New York and in the Erie country in Western Pennsylvania. He went West in 1879 to manage the Missouri Lumber & Mining Company, in which the Grandins, eastern capitalists, had the largest stake; and when the joint sales agency was formed, he became its manager in addition to continuing as manager of the lumber company at Grandin. He moved to Kansas City and ran both businesses from that vantage point.[1] In later years, he was one of the principals in large lumber enterprises in Louisiana, Washington and Idaho, as well as a variety of businesses in other lines. In 1911, he was president of the National Conservation Congress. He was a wartime member of the U. S. Shipping Board. He was almost universally known as Captain White, a title which was bestowed when his summer cottage in the Ozarks was built with two chimneys, whereas its neighbors had but one.[2] He was a man of great force and vision, and he and O. W. became close friends as well as business partners.[3]

O. W.'s association with Captain White led to somewhat similar alliances with several other prominent figures in the lumber business. They included the brothers Grandin, the eastern financiers; Colonel William H. Dulany of Hannibal, Missouri, and his sons George and Dan; and W. B. Pettibone, also of Hannibal. The Dulanys and Pettibone, along with White, had participated with the Grandins in the ownership of Missouri Lumber & Mining Company, and now O. W. became a member of this circle. During the next twenty-five years, when any one of these men launched a new lumber venture, he gave the others an opportunity to take a share and as a rule they did, although there were a few exceptions. Some years later, the cross-participation extended beyond the lumber business. It was similar to the basis on which O. W. worked with Judge Barnett and the Cordz brothers except that thenceforth the ventures would be much larger than the earlier ones.

There is of course nothing unusual in a group of men with capital and similar interests organizing a partnership or corporation as a vehicle for the transaction of business. It is done many thousand times every year. The unusual feature in what the Missouri lumber group did is that their cross-participation continued for more than sixty years. After the members of the original group died or retired, the mantle of close association descended to their sons and in time to their grandsons and even their great-grandsons. Thus, Fisher companies of the present day have among their stockholders persons named White, Grandin and Dulany; White companies have Fishers, Grandin and Dulany; and so on. This association generation after generation is not merely unusual – it is very close to being unique. A majority of business alliances do not continue beyond one generation; and of those which do, very few indeed survive a second. Here we have a whole series which are going strong in the fourth generation.

Captain White lived next door in Kansas City to A. E. Stillwell, an empire-building genius who had promoted the construction of the Kansas City Southern Railroad. This line ran almost due south to the Gulf. It was Stillwell who fired the interest of White and O. W. in timber lands in Louisiana, along his railroad's right-of-way. They began exploring the area as early as 1897, but it was nearly two years before they were ready to act. They purchased about ten thousand acres in the Sabine River country eighty miles or so south of Shreveport, and on July 15, 1899, they incorporated the Louisiana Long Leaf Lumber Company.[4] What made White and O. W. hesitate so long was the question of land titles, but after a thorough investigation they satisfied themselves on that delicate point. It was doubt about land titles which kept the cautious Grandins out of the deal, although it was the only one of a long series of enterprises launched by the various members of the Missouri group in which they did not invest.

O. W. was president and general manager of the new company,[5] and White was secretary-treasurer. They selected young W. W. (Willard) Warren to take charge in Louisiana, and because of the medical problems involved in operating in a swampland area he took along Dr. Franklin White, the captain's son. Henry Cordz, who excelled in running a sawmill, came down from Birch Tree to build the plant. The logical location was the town of Many, but the good people there didn't want any such noisy and dirty thing as a sawmill in their midst. It was therefore necessary not only to put the sawmill six miles south of Many, but also to build a town around it. The place was named Fisher, in honor of the company president. The new sawmill went into operation a month or so before the end of 1899.

Willard Warren, who was to play such an important part in Four L history, was Illinois-born and Nebraska-reared. Soon after he left high school, he began working for the

Bullard lumberyard chain in Nebraska. A letter which he wrote Captain White greatly impressed that man, and Willard was invited to talk to him about a job. The opportunity almost evaporated when the young man showed up smoking a cigaret, a habit which White abhorred. Willard promised immediately to drop the habit if the captain found him otherwise acceptable,[6] and so he went to Grandin, Missouri in *1895*. There he learned the business of producing lumber, and his competence and resourcefulness so impressed White that when the Four L was formed he told O. W. that he knew the very man for the key post in the new establishment.

Willard and the young doctor found themselves in the midst of a great forest when they left the train. The people in the area were hostile to northerners, hostile to corporations and distinctly unfriendly to anything that might disturb their way of life. They emphasized their dislike by shooting the windows out of the Warren-White cabin time after time, but these and other ungracious acts did not drive out the newcomers. Malaria almost did, however, and the young men had to nurse each other through a succession of attacks. Despite these obstacles, the sawmill was built and many of the previous objectors found employment in the establishment.

The Four L was a success after the pattern of Cordz-Fisher. It yielded satisfactory profits from its inception, and continued to do so year after year. In the course of time, a great deal of additional timber land was acquired and a second sawmill built; and finally a third, at the town of Victoria. The company is now in its sixty-second year of operation, and in late years a program of reforestation has been developed which practically assures the indefinite continuation of lumber production by the Four L. It was propelled on its course by Cordz-Fisher, and the second stage of the Fisher financial rocket proved to be as much of a success as the first.

During the years when O. W. was managing Cordz-Fisher and establishing the Four L, his sons were making noteworthy progress on their own. Two years after Will P. and Burr had formed a partnership to run the Boulder store, they felt sufficiently established to branch out. In *1895,* Burr opened a store in Missoula, Montana, and it seems significant that it was called Fisher Bros. Golden Rule Store, the identical name of the Boulder store. Will P. continued to manage the Boulder establishment, but within a few months he suffered a severe sunstroke and was unable to work for a large part of a year. The responsibility for running the Boulder store fell upon Dan's shoulders during this period, although he was but seventeen and his only store experience had been gained during a few months of clerking at Birch Tree.

In *1896,* O. W. traded the Humansville house and his bank interest to Andy Murphy for the Golden Rule Store in Bozeman, Montana; Burr became the manager and Dan then took charge in Missoula. It had been the intention for Ollie to go to Bozeman, but tearful objections by his father at the last minute made it necessary to change the plan, and that young man remained in Missouri for another seven years. Will P. operated the Boulder store until *1900,* when it was sold, and he then became Missoula manager. Simultaneously, Dan opened a store at Red Lodge, Montana, in the high mountain country about sixty miles northeast of Yellowstone National Park.

Also in *1896,* the Birch Tree store had a new clerk – a girl named Nellie Hughes, who was born on a farm near Irondale, about sixty-five miles southwest of St. Louis. Her parents moved to Cape Girardeau to obtain better schools, and her father continued to operate the farm by remote control. He was also associated with a local lumber yard. Nellie taught a one-room rural school for a term, and then through her Uncle Jake – a travelling salesman whose territory included Birch Tree – she was employed by the Cordz-Fisher store. It was not long before Ollie, the store manager, began to whisper sweet nothings in her ear, and on December *10, 1896,* they were married. Ollie was two weeks past twenty-one, Nellie a year and a half younger. The newlyweds set up housekeeping at Birch Tree, where they were to live for about eight years. Ollie had been in charge of the Cordz-Fisher store since *1895,* and with each succeeding year he was entrusted with additional responsibilities in company affairs.

At the mid-point of the *1890*'s, the young proprietors of Fisher Bros. Golden Rule Stores, along with their friends in similar emporiums, decided to become professional buyers as well as merchants. They computed their total annual turnover in dollars, and reckoned that the amount of goods they handled was sufficient to make their business worth reaching for on the part of distributors and manufacturers. They formed what they called the Golden Rule Syndicate. It consisted at the start of the managers of eight stores, and in the course of a few years more than three times that number were represented in the group. The members of the syndicate went to sources of supply for clothing, shoes, hats, hardware and other staples. At first, their trips to market took them mainly to St. Louis and Chicago, but within a short time they were also going to New York, Boston and to some extent elsewhere.

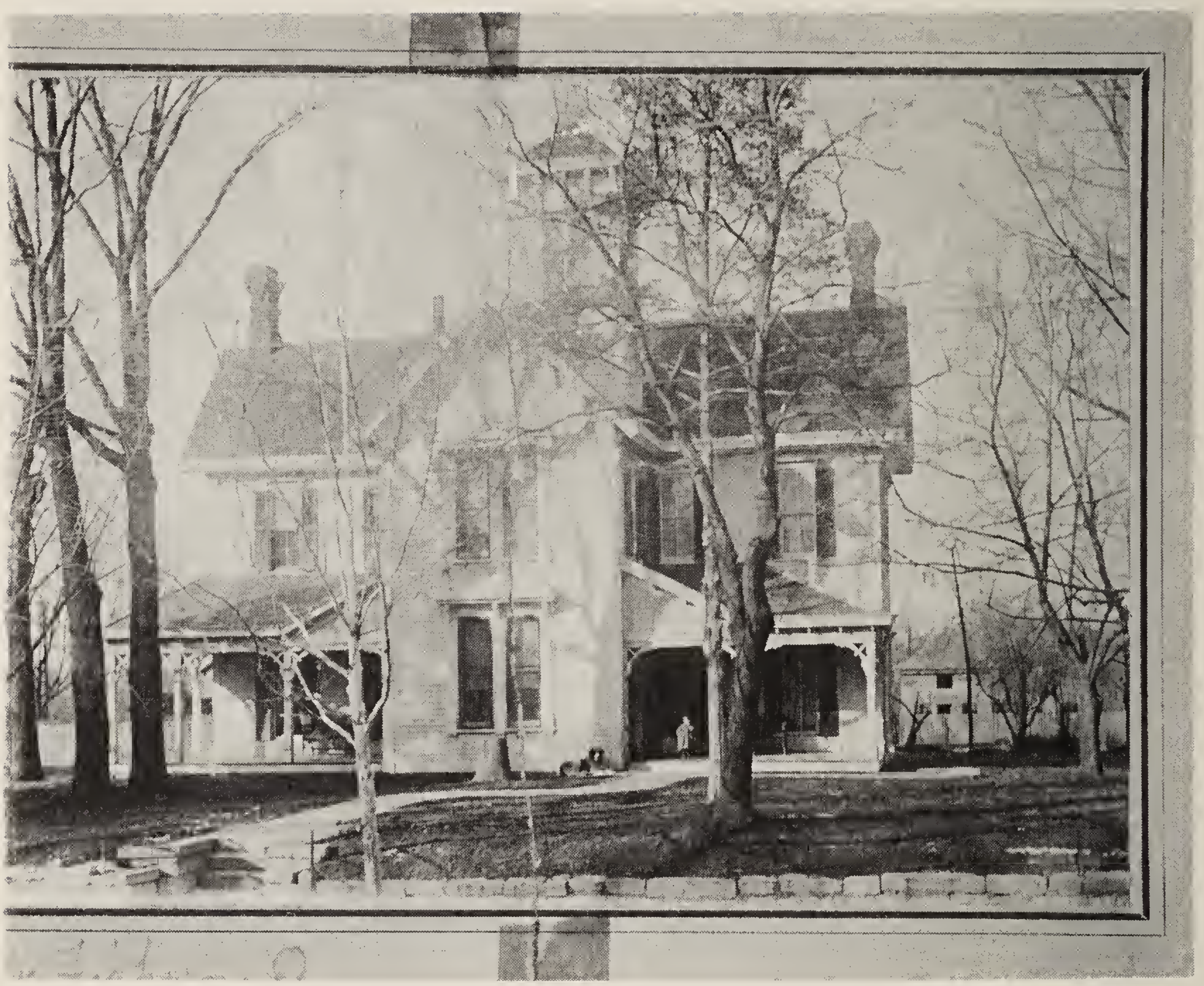
Will P., Burr and Ollie were charter members of the Golden Rule Syndicate, and Burr is usually credited with initiating it. He was referred to as president in a newspaper article describing its activities,[7] although actually it had no formal organization. However, he was recognized by the group as its leader. The practice was for the members to go together on their buying trips. As a rule, they went to market twice annually for several weeks. Each man was assigned to a line of goods, and he shopped around until he found the best deal to be had. The prices obtained were then available to all members, but for the most part each manager placed his own orders. A proposal several years later to centralize the buying was not adopted.

The Golden Rule Syndicate remained in existence about fifteen years. It was a sort of fraternity because a majority of its members had been boys together in Humansville, and those who did not possess that qualification were admitted a little reluctantly. The members took great pride in the fact that they were able to buy goods at the lowest prices available to anyone in the nation, and that a group of "country boys" were as good as "city slickers" in haggling over prices for store items. The syndicate finally disintegrated, largely because its founders retired from storekeeping, and a majority of their stores ultimately found their way into the growing J. C. Penney chain, some of them being first in the hands of Charley Dimmitt, who had come from Humansville.[8]

Fisher Bros.' business was growing, and in *1901* it was decided to supplant the partnership with a corporation, known as the Fisher Mercantile Company. Will P. became president, Burr vice-president and Dan secretary-treasurer. O. W., who owned a substantial share of the company, had the somewhat anomalous title of general manager. His duties consisted of making the rounds several times per year, watching the finances and generally keeping track of how things were going. His function thus was that of elder statesman and advisor, and nowadays he would probably be called chairman of the board.

Ollie remained at Birch Tree more than eleven years. He was assistant manager of Cordz-Fisher from *1895*, but after O. W. became absorbed in Four L problems Ollie was his father's first deputy in the Missouri company. His first responsibility through all this period was the operation of the company store; it continued until *1904*, when the south tract of yellow pine was cut out.[9] During the late *1890*'s, Ollie became interested in the mineral outcroppings on Cordz-Fisher land, and in *1899* he organized the Shannon County Mining Company to exploit them. He operated the mines for a year and later leased the properties to others. Subsequently, the concern was renamed the National Livestock & Mining Company, and the mines have continued to operate to the present day. O. W. was president and Ollie manager; several of the Missouri lumber group took shares in the venture.

It was in Cordz-Fisher days that Ollie also became a lawyer of sorts. Sawmills commonly had numerous personal injury claims, many of which could be settled without undue trouble if dealt with promptly. The ones that went to court were all turned over to company counsel, of course, but Ollie took care of the vast majority. It seems significant that in all the years of company operation, its counsel never challenged a juror and never lost a personal injury case in court. Then there were the interminable land title problems, as the company was constantly both acquiring and selling tracts of land; and in many cases there were squatters' claims and other complications. Aided by a correspondence course, Ollie became quite proficient on land title issues and to this day he personally checks on all purchases of land by companies with which he has management duties.



. . . the O. W. Fishers lived in Springfield
for eight happy years . . .

The years in Springfield were the golden time of life for O. W. and Euphemia. They were respected members of the community. In spite of her crippled condition, Euphemia was as active in church affairs as she had ever been. She looked after the sick people of her acquaintance just as she had at Humansville. Lula matured into a beautiful and accomplished young woman; she first attended Drury College, and then had a year's training in home economics at Montana State, living with Burr and Jennie at the time; she had singing talent and took instruction for several years. Wallace was attending private school mainly because the public school was inconveniently located.

Willard Warren had risen steadily in O. W.'s esteem because of his industry and capability, and he succeeded to the Four L general management. The company minutes do not record the time when this promotion took place, but it may have been as early as *1902*. The family was all delighted when Willard and Lula fell in love, and they were married in Springfield on January *27*, *1904*, and went to live at the lumber town of Fisher, Louisiana which became their home for more than ten years.

O. W. and Euphemia could count six grandchildren before they left Springfield. Will P. and Estelle had three – David Meeker, born September *22*, *1892;* Ben Herr, born at Boulder on January *21*, *1895;* and Julia Euphemia, born on February *3*, *1897*, also at Boulder. Barnett, son of Burr and Jennie, was born at Missoula on November *7*, *1896*. Two little girls graced the Birch Tree home of Ollie and Nellie – Juanita and Irene, whose birth dates were September *15*, *1897* and April *5*, *1901*, respectively.

O. W.'s business affairs prospered greatly through all these years, and he began to turn some of the actual management over to others and to retain the role of overseer.

It was no longer necessary for him to drive himself as he had been accustomed, although he was about as restless and energetic as ever. He and Euphemia began to take long trips, and almost invariably these trips were in the West. He came to take a great fancy to Montana, but doubtless he was much influenced by the fact that his sons were living in the Treasure State. In *1904*, he and Euphemia decided to make their home at Bozeman, in the valley of the Gallatin River.

vi

The Fishers In Montana

Fisher identification with Montana dates back to *1895*, when Burr took charge of a Golden Rule Store in Missoula. Throughout the sixty-six years which have elapsed since that event, there has not been a time when one or more members of the family were not residents of Montana; and early in this century nearly the entire clan lived in the state for a short period. Fisher business connection with Montana has been extensive and continuous.

The migration from Missouri to Montana is no more mysterious than was the Yankee trek two generations before to the Middle West or the Middle Western movement to the Great Plains region the generation after that. For more than a century and a quarter after the nation was founded, the urge to travel beyond the boundless western horizon to explore and settle and establish civilization with its trappings was all but irresistible to a legion of young men. O. W. Fisher had been borne on the westward tide from Ohio to Missouri, and now history was repeating itself in the hands of his sons.

Montana had been a state but six years when Burr put down his roots there. It had a population of about one hundred fifty thousand – scarcely more than one person per square mile – but it would approach the quarter million mark before the end of the decade. There was still a distinct tinge of newness about Montana in the *1890*'s, even though the mines at the "richest hill on earth" and elsewhere had been worked for thirty years and even though a large part of the state was a vast cattle range.

Missoula had only three thousand five hundred inhabitants, but in the state only Helena, Butte and Anaconda were larger. It is not far from the Idaho border, on the Clark's Fork River at a point where several great valleys converge. These valleys lie between the Bitter Root Mountains and the Rockies. The second Fisher store in Montana was in Bozeman, located in the Gallatin Valley about sixty miles north of Yellowstone National Park. It was purely a coincidence that these stores were both in university towns, as had been the earlier store venture in Boulder, Colorado.

Burr was followed by Dan, who remained in Missoula more than three years, and he managed the Golden Rule Store at Red Lodge for several years. In *1903*, Dan became manager of the store in Great Falls, which was soon to become the leading business center of the state. Meanwhile, the sale of the Boulder store brought Will P. to Montana in *1900* in charge of the Missoula store. As the towns grew, the stores expanded. A few years earlier, the inventory of the store did not run much above six thousand dollars, but Dan recalls that before he and his brothers were out of the business the Great Falls inventory averaged forty thousand dollars, and he thinks that the others may have been even larger.

O. W.'s investments in southern lumber properties grew somewhat as he took a comparatively small interest in Louisiana Central Lumber Company, formed in 1902 by J. B. White. He followed the same pattern with several of White's subsequent ventures in that area. His eyes had begun to turn westward, however, and in 1903 he and Ollie went on a scouting trip for timberlands in the Far West. Nothing resulted at the time from this expedition,[1] but on their way home they stopped to do a little fishing and have a visit in Montana.

Burr suggested to his father and brother that they look around the Gallatin Valley, adding that there was a little flour mill at nearby Belgrade which was for sale. "I'd like to see the valley, but don't want to go to Belgrade," responded his father. "If I step into the mill, I'll probably buy it – and I don't want to own a flour mill." The promise was thereupon made that no stop would be made at Belgrade, but it was necessary to go through the town to reach the area O. W. wanted to see. The mill owner, standing in his doorway, spied the travellers and rushed out into the road to invite them to visit his establishment.

O. W. accepted the invitation but stated again that he wasn't in the market for a mill. Nevertheless, an hour and a half later he had title to the plant. It was a new mill which had operated only briefly. It was located in a wheat-growing area, and there were only a few mills in Montana. It was O. W.'s first connection in twenty-one years with flour milling, although that had been his principal occupation for quite a period during his early manhood. This may well have been the seed from which grew the big Fisher mill in Seattle.

The Belgrade mill brought Ollie to Montana as manager. For a year or more, he divided his time between Birch Tree and Belgrade. It was a period when Cordz-Fisher was being made ready for liquidation. The yellow pine forest was cut out, the sawmill was closed, and then one after another the properties passed to new owners – the store, the company houses, the cutover lands and finally the sawmill site. The end had come to O. W.'s first large business venture.

Flour milling had been revolutionized since O. W. operated grist mills in Ontario, Kentucky and Missouri. He had learned the art on stone buhrs, which for a thousand years had been the conventional method of crushing wheat and milling flour, but at Belgrade there were no stones – they had been supplanted by corrugated steel rolls which had first come to America from Hungary in the late 1870's. Then, too, the middlings purifier had been perfected, making it possible to separate the flour streams more precisely than in the past. O. W. marvelled at these technological improvements, but unlike many oldtime millers he did not oppose them.

Ollie and Nellie and their little girls left Birch Tree in the spring of 1904, and moved to Bozeman. Their stay in Montana was to be rather brief, but for a short time all of the brothers were living in the same area – the first such circumstance in a decade. Ollie applied himself with his customary thoroughness to learning the flour milling business, in which he was then a neophyte. The Belgrade mill, which was christened Gallatin Valley Milling Company, had a capacity of only one hundred fifty barrels of flour per day, but was soon enlarged to about twice that size. However, it was large enough to enable him to master the intricacies of

. . . by early 1904 he and Euphemia were having
a fine house built . . . at Bozeman . . .

flour production and to deal with the perplexities of finding suitable markets for the output of the mill. Montana was at first the sole outlet, but before long the Puget Sound area was brought into the trade area of the mill.

With Cordz-Fisher liquidated and the bank sold, O. W. had few business ties remaining in Missouri. He was pleased with the way Four L was doing, but although he looked at other Louisiana properties he made no move on his own in that state and participated in Captain White's new companies only to a moderate extent. With all of his adult sons established in Montana, his lifelong passion for keeping the family together asserted itself again and by early *1904* he and Euphemia were having a fine house built for them at Bozeman. They were Montana residents before the year was over.

It was not an easy decision. O. W. and Euphemia were genuinely fond of Missouri, and to the end of their days they regarded themselves as transplanted Missourians. All their friends, all of Euphemia's church connections, most of O. W.'s cronies were in Missouri; they had risen from poverty to wealth and high station in Missouri; but the magnet of their sons in Montana exerted a pull which overcame all other attractions. Lula would be farther away, but she was far away in any event, and they decided that their visits to her would not be greatly interfered with by the move to Montana.

The family was destined to remain together in Montana for only a short time. Will P. and Estelle and their son David took in the world's fair in Portland in *1905* and visited the Puget Sound region en route home. While in Seattle, they went to the top of Queen Anne Hill, and were enchanted with the gorgeous view – the Olympic Mountains, the Sound studded with islands, majestic Mount Rainier, the forests, the Cascades, Lake Washington, Mount Baker. At length, Will P. said, "Estelle, why should we live in Montana, when there's a place like this? I'm sure I could find some way to make a living here."

Not long after the Will P. Fishers returned home, he found a buyer for the Missoula store, and the family moved to Seattle. They were complete strangers, and his only prospect of a job was the need which Gallatin Valley Milling Company had for somebody to represent the little mill in the flour trade in and around Seattle. Will P. parlayed that situation into more than a job – he established a thriving flour brokerage business.[2] It was only a year after O. W. and Euphemia and Wallace came to Montana that the eldest son and his family moved to Seattle.

Will P. set up the Fisher Trading Company and not only represented Gallatin Valley, but also a couple of non-competitive mills which made only soft wheat flours whereas Gallatin Valley milled nothing but hard spring wheat.[3] As Will P. was calling on bakers all the time, he found that it was advantageous to handle various bakery supply items in addition to flour. Within a few years, he had built up an excellent business that was a tribute to his sales ability. He made a study of flours and their properties, and though he had no technical training he came to have a much greater knowledge of the subject than did any other salesman in that area.

Less than a year after Will P. moved to Seattle there came a series of events which sent Ollie to the Puget Sound area. These were the Fisher entry into the lumber business in Washington and subsequently into other lines of commercial activity there. Ollie relinquished the management of Gallatin Valley Milling Company, and was succeeded by Dan. Thus the Fishers remaining after Will P. and Ollie departed for Seattle were all located in Bozeman. Burr continued to operate the Golden Rule Store in that town until the end of *1910*, when he ended sixteen years' residence in Montana and almost two decades in the mercantile business. That coincided with the dissolution of Fisher Mercantile Company, all of its stores by that time having passed to other hands although the Fishers retained an interest for some years in the Chambers-Fisher store which succeeded the Bozeman store when Burr left.

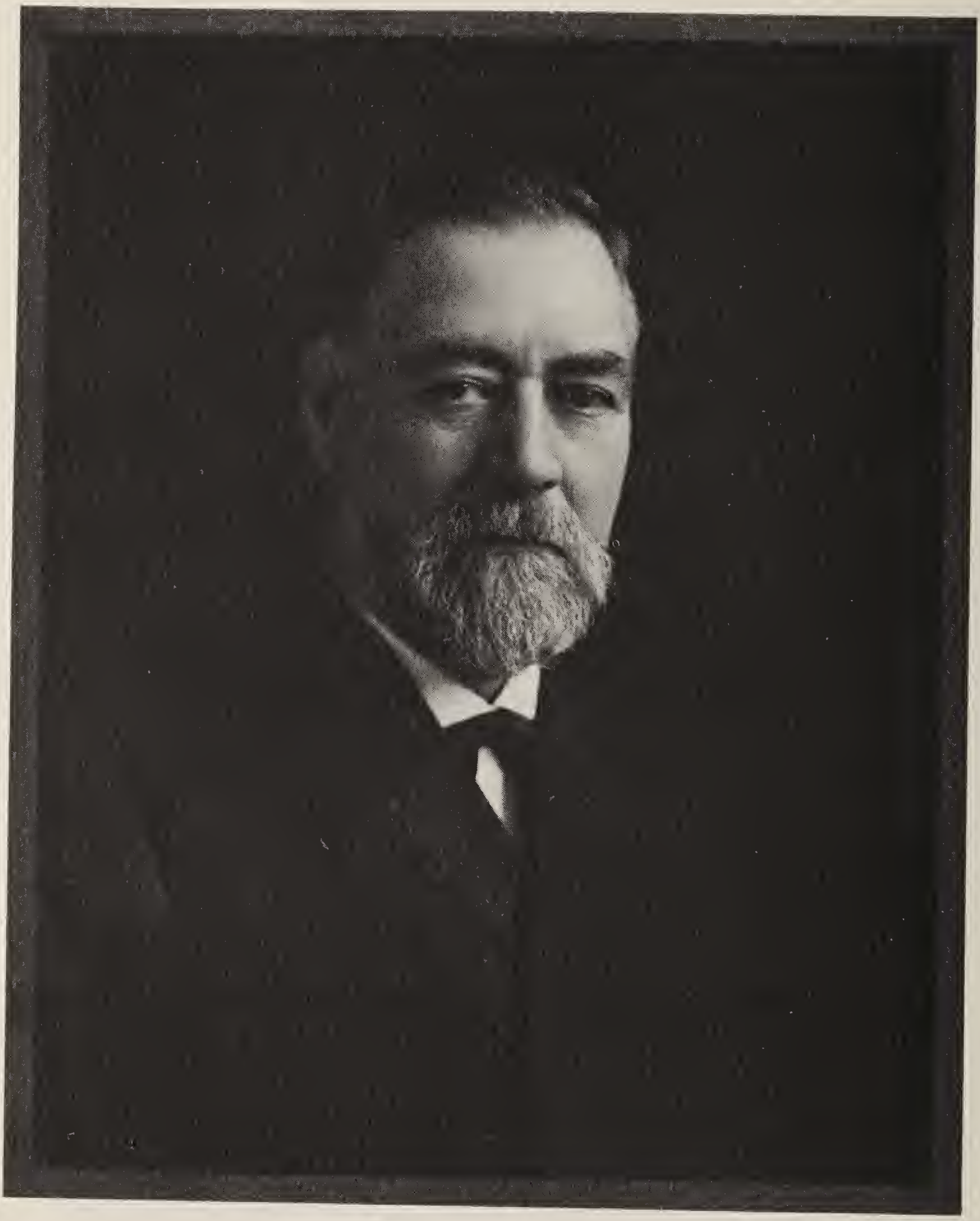
Dan remained a citizen of Montana until *1919*. He left the store business in *1906* when he became manager of Gallatin Valley Milling Company. He continued in that capacity after the formation of Fisher Flouring Mills Company in *1910*, but the Montana country elevator properties of the latter company were consolidated into Gallatin Valley[4] and Dan's sphere of activities was considerably enlarged as time went on. His headquarters were moved in *1914* to Great Falls, which had become the most important wheat market in the state. He was married to May Beatrice Bennett, daughter of the Methodist minister at Bozeman, on June *23*, *1908*; they made their home at Belgrade.

Wallace went to preparatory school at Bozeman, and in *1908* he became an engineering student at Montana State College in Bozeman. He completed the four years' curriculum except for his thesis. In *1912*, he went to Cornell University for advanced work in engineering and received the degree of mechanical engineer, with a certificate in electrical engineering. Like three of his older brothers, Wallace was short and stocky; he was about five feet six. He had definite engineering talent, and he also had musical ability.

First Will P., next Ollie and then Burr had gone from Montana, Dan had left Belgrade for Great Falls, and finally Wallace was ready to strike out on his own. O. W. and Euphemia, who had moved from Springfield to Bozeman to be near their sons, found that they were alone once more. Moreover, O. W. had become heavily involved in businesses in and near Seattle, beginning in *1906*. These developments, plus the fact that the Warrens had gone to Seattle in *1914*, caused them to sell the Bozeman home that year and move to the city on Elliott Bay. They built a home on Belmont Place.

During the Bozeman years, O. W. invested heavily in a bank and in business property in that town. He spent a great deal of time travelling from one place to another studying the operation of each of the businesses in which he had a substantial interest. He was accustomed to go to the stores operated by Fisher Mercantile Company, looking over the stocks and studying their books and inventories. He was at Fisher several times a year, doing much the same thing in addition to being the doting grandpa to the Warren boys. He went to Seattle also, where his main enterprises were Grandin-Coast Lumber Company and Fisher Flouring Mills Company. He was president of these large concerns. Although he possessed a great deal of power in all of these companies as well as several others, he was not the active manager of any of them. The mantle of managership was on other shoulders. He had become the valued advisor, the man of experience whose counsel was sought and followed, the wise elder statesman who cautioned and guided and encouraged. He was by no means retired, but he was no longer directing the day-to-day operation of any of the businesses.

Pictures of O. W. in the Montana era show a much closer-cropped beard than the Van Dyke that he wore so long. It had also become quite gray, and about the time he left Montana he abandoned the beard and thereafter had only a mustache. His weight reached the two hundred and thirty pound level. He was past seventy-one before he took up



. . . pictures of O. W. in the Montana era
show a much closer-cropped beard . . .

. . . *Euphemia* . . .

residence in Seattle, but he stood erect and his health was good. However, Euphemia was crippled to such an extent that she moved about chiefly in a wheel chair. She could still speak her mind on occasion, as she did when an elevator was planned without her knowledge for the new home in Seattle. She was no invalid, she averred stoutly, and made such a fuss that the plans were altered and the elevator left out.

The number of grandchildren doubled during the Bozeman years. The new ones were Kenneth Robinson, third son of Will P. and Estelle, born in Seattle on December *12, 1906;* Jack, second son of Burr and Jennie Lee, born at Bozeman on December *11, 1905;* Daniel Robinson, Jr., and Bennett Irvine, sons of Dan and May, born at Bozeman on February *9, 1911* and June *13, 1913,* respectively; and the Warren boys – George Fisher, born April *11, 1906,* and William Willard, Jr., born August *22, 1911,* both at Fisher. The second half-dozen were all boys; the first six had been evenly divided.

vii

The Tide Taken At Flood[1]

The possibility is very remote that O. W. Fisher ever read these lines:

There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune;[2]

There is nevertheless no doubt that O. W. would have subscribed to the philosophy embodied in the quotation. It was his lifelong practice to move at once when an attractive opportunity became available. He had the faculty of quick and accurate appraisal of a situation, and when his judgment told him to act he moved without hesitation. Nothing illustrates this better than the Fisher entry into the lumber business in the Pacific Northwest.

The time was April *1906*. San Francisco had been laid prostrate by the double catastrophe of earthquake and fire. A large part of the city was destroyed, but the courageous spirit of the people rose through the ashes and the rubble and they proclaimed proudly that they would rebuild their beloved city and that it would become greater than ever.

One morning during this period, O. W. set out from his Bozeman home for Belgrade. When he entered the office occupied by his son Ollie, that young man was so engrossed in the morning copy of the *Butte Miner* that he did not realize that his father had entered the room.

"Son, you sure are glued to that paper. What are you reading about?" asked the older man.

"About the San Francisco fire, and how its forward progress has been stopped at Van Ness Avenue by dynamiting all the buildings in a strip a block wide," answered the son. "I was also thinking about what a tremendous amount of lumber will be required to rebuild the city, and that this is the time for us to buy as much timber as we can out on the west coast because prices will move up sharply in the next six months."

O. W. pondered the proposition only briefly. "You are undoubtedly right," he responded. "How soon can you go there and look up some property?"

That was no hunch nor exercise of snap judgment. O. W. had been thinking for several years about the lumber business in the Pacific states. Now the time had come for action.

Three years before this conversation, the Fishers had made a futile attempt to obtain western timber property. Working through a Missoula broker, Ollie was then angling for an option on a large tract in Idaho, and he and his father were about to leave on an inspection trip when the disheartening word arrived that Weyerhaeuser Timber Company had just exercised an option about which the Missourians had no knowledge. Father and son decided nevertheless to make a scouting trip to the west coast, and after a brief incursion in California they made Tacoma their headquarters as they studied cruising reports and picked up other information about a considerable list of timber tracts that were for sale. These tracts ranged as far south as the Siskiyou Mountains in California and as far north as British Columbia. One day O. W. called a halt.

"Ollie, we've been here nearly three weeks, and in all that time we haven't been able to cruise any timber nor even to see the mountains because of smoke from forest fires," he said. "Owning timber under these conditions would be an awful risky thing. Let's go home!"

When they were in Montana on the way back to Missouri, O. W. became involved in the deal for the Belgrade flour mill and subsequently in other business properties in Montana.

It was not until later that the Fishers learned that the smoky condition which obscured the Pacific landscape did not arise from true forest fires – that it mainly came from cutover lands and undergrowth being burned off under controlled conditions. The result was a great reduction in the fire hazard to standing timber. They then regretted that they had abandoned their quest in the coast states, and the idea of engaging in the lumber business in that area had been discussed frequently in the intervening time. That is why O. W. was ready to act in *1906* on short notice.

It was obvious to the two men that a fabulous quantity of lumber would be needed to rebuild the city named in honor of St. Francis; that the great demand would cause lumber prices to advance, and that standing timber values would rise in proportion. Ollie sent messages to owners of timber tracts that had been for sale asking for options, and soon thereafter he had organized his affairs at Belgrade sufficiently to enable him to leave for the Puget Sound country.

Seattle lumber circles were in a fever of excitement when the young man from Montana arrived. The Fishers were by no means the only persons to have perceived what effect the destruction of San Francisco would have on the lumber business. There was widespread speculation in timberlands. None of this interested Ollie very much. He went about the business of obtaining options on standing timber,[3] and when that was done he put a heavy pack on his back and disappeared for weeks in the woods as he made reconnaisance cruises over the tracts covered by the options. When he returned, he knew more about the lumber potential of these properties than did their owners.

The annual meetings of the several lumber companies in which the Fishers, the Whites, the Grandins, the Dulanys and the Pettibones were jointly interested always took place in Kansas City, as they were all Missouri corporations. The routine business of the *1906* gatherings was disposed of quickly, and then Ollie Fisher was asked to report on his tour of exploration into the Cascade area during the preceding weeks. He was then just past thirty, and he was speaking to men who were many years his senior, all of them veteran lumbermen who knew the business through and through. He described in detail several great timber tracts which were available, and he spoke about the prospects for the lumber business in the Pacific Northwest. Even if they had been inclined to be skeptical, the men in his audience could not seriously discount his enthusiastic recital for it coincided reasonably well with such general information as they had about the situation. "Gentlemen, you will miss one of the great opportunities of your lives if you don't go to Washington and see things for yourselves," he concluded.

To these seasoned lumbermen, Ollie's account had the same effect that smoke has on old firehorses. They could hardly wait to get to the Puget Sound area, and it was only a few days before they reassembled in Everett. There were the Grandins – E. B. of Washington, D.C., and J. L. of Boston, financial geniuses and canny investors in timber property; Captain J. B. White of Kansas City; the Dulany brothers, George of Hannibal, Missouri, and Dan of Eau Claire, Wisconsin with interests in Missouri, Louisiana, Wisconsin and elsewhere; W. B. Pettibone of Hannibal, local rival of the Dulanys but their associate in various ventures; and O. W. Fisher. These men were in their sixties or older, and they probably had as much collective lumber knowledge as any seven men in America. And there was also present young Ollie Fisher, who had done all the advance work for the forthcoming great venture.

The group soon discarded all the prospective deals but two. One of these was at Mukilteo, a few miles outside of Everett. At that place was a nice tract of timber running down almost to the water's edge, and a new sawmill was in operation on the property. The fact that a ship was taking on a load of four million feet of lumber direct from the mill made a strong impression on several of the men. The other tract was in the Snoqualmie Valley, thirty miles or so east of Seattle. It consisted mainly of alternate sections interspersed with Weyerhaeuser holdings, and was owned by the Rockefellers through a concern called the Everett Timber and Investment Company.

Each tract had its advocates within the group, so it was decided to divide the men into two sections to make some investigations. The question had been raised whether the sawmill had been properly built and whether it had a firm foundation. George Dulany and O. W., two of the most experienced sawmill operators in the group, were appointed to study the sawmill, and the others went up to the Snoqualmie country to have a firsthand look at the woods. Nowadays a person can go from Everett to Snoqualmie in little more than an hour, but in *1906* it was an all-day job.

It was surely not the first time that these experienced lumbermen had seen the great virgin forests of the Cascade slopes, but nevertheless they were astonished at the marvelous four hundred-year-old stand of timber – Douglas fir ranging from four up to an extreme of twelve feet in diameter and two hundred seventy-five feet in height, cedars almost as large and hemlocks two hundred feet high. On they went, acre after acre and mile after mile, but finally E. B. Grandin called a halt. "Ollie, you and the cruiser measure off a square acre anywhere here and count the trees," he commanded. "Every man present knows how to estimate lumber yields. Let's figure out what this tract will produce."

When the men reached thirty-nine in their count of Douglas fir, they were stopped by E. B. "That means that there can't possibly be as little as half a million board feet of lumber on this acre, and it doesn't seem to be much different from hundreds of other acres we have seen," he exclaimed. "I didn't know there was any such timber in the world. Let's go back and buy this tract. I'll never rest until I own some of it."

When the entire group reassembled in Everett, O. W. brought things to a head at once. "I don't want any part of that sawmill," he announced. "There's a millwright over there from Missouri, and he says that it isn't properly built and that it has a lot of poor machinery. Anyway, we could see that for ourselves."

That very night the Grandin-Coast Lumber Company was organized. The option which Ollie held as trustee on the Rockefeller holdings of about fifteen thousand acres was taken up. O. W. Fisher was elected president of the new company and Ollie was chosen as manager.

The new company was named in honor of its largest stockholders. The Grandin brothers had a fabulous instinct for money-making. They began by operating a private bank at Tidioute, a village in Northwestern Pennsylvania. This was not far from Titusville, where the first American oil well was brought in. Realizing the possibilities in petroleum before most others, they invested heavily and made a fortune in the *1860*'s. A decade later they purchased large amounts of Northern Pacific bonds at ten cents on the dollar during the Jay Cooke debacle, and traded these bonds at par to the railroad a few years afterward for forty thousand acres of its landgrant property in the famous Red River Valley of North Dakota. There they operated one of the bonanza wheat farms of the *1880*'s, and a town in that area is named Grandin. The land which they had acquired at an outlay of two to four dollars per acre was sold at from twenty-five to forty dollars. Thereafter they invested in timber property in the Missouri Ozarks and later in Louisiana. Although they were large stockholders in Grandin-Coast, they by no means controlled that company. They will appear in several subsequent businesses founded by the Fisher group.

O. W. was elected president partly because his home was in Montana and therefore he was much nearer the scene of action than was anyone else in the group, but also because he had come to be recognized by his colleagues as the equal of any of them in lumber know-how. It was not expected that he would devote a great deal of time to the new project, but he did agree to keep an eye on all important activities.

Even in advance of the formation of the new company, the members of the group had agreed upon Ollie as its manager. He and his father had initiated the project, he had located the magnificent tract of Snoqualmie Valley timber,[3] he had spent weeks in cruising the tract and in determining its value after he had tied it up under an option, and he had won the wholehearted admiration of men more than twice his age and infinitely greater experience, for cruising the Rockefeller property and assembling the facts with all the skill of a veteran. Not only was he made manager, he was elected to the board of directors at the organization meeting.

Advance expectations as to the Grandin-Coast property proved to be conservative. The price of lumber went up and remained on a higher level for years. The tract turned out more lumber than had been estimated, when it was cut in later years. The purchase was well-timed, and it added substantially to the fortunes of all who participated. It was the third stage of the Fisher financial rocket which as a result of Grandin-Coast went into orbit and has remained there to this day.

The Rockefellers were willing to sell their Snoqualmie Valley holdings because these consisted mainly of sections of land which alternated with Weyerhaeuser property. They felt that it would be difficult and perhaps impossible to take off the lumber under these conditions. When the area was acquired in the early 1890's, Rockefeller agents had expected to be able to buy the remaining timberland in the valley; at that time, it was owned chiefly by the Northern Pacific through grant from the government to finance the construction of the railroad. The Weyerhaeuser interests stole a march on the Rockefellers and others by the famous deal of January 3, 1900, under which they obtained title to nearly a million acres of Northern Pacific timberlands for six dollars per acre. After trying vainly to persuade the new owners to let them have the Snoqualmie Valley timber, the Rockefeller agents decided to get out of the area.

The Grandin-Coast group was not happy because their property consisted of alternate sections, with Weyerhaeuser timber in between, but the members who knew the Weyerhaeusers believed that an equitable arrangement could be worked out with that concern when the time came for cutting the timber. Thus it was that Ollie called upon George S. Long, general manager of Weyerhaeuser Timber Company, Tacoma, to announce that the group he represented had purchased the Snoqualmie tract.

"The hell you have!" snapped Long.

"Yes, the hell we have," answered young Fisher. "Why do you say that?"

"Because Weyerhaeuser wants it," was the frank response.

It may have been an inauspicious beginning for a conversation, but in a short while the two men came to understand each other. Long realized at once that the Grandin-Coast people were not a group of speculators looking for a quick gain; he knew them all by reputation as competent lumbermen, and he and they spoke the same language. His respect for the new owners grew when his younger companion stated that his associates were of the opinion that it would not be wise for them to build a sawmill immediately because the lumber market might well be glutted before their mill could get into production; and therefore would be disposed to wait a few years to begin harvesting their lumber crop.

"Makes sense to me," commented Long, and he and Ollie went on to work out a deal the substance of which was that when Grandin-Coast was ready to begin the production of lumber at Snoqualmie, one of two courses would be followed: Weyerhaeuser would sell its timber at the market price to the new company as the timber was reached in the course of cutting; or the Weyerhaeuser and Grandin-Coast tracts would be merged and cut by a new company.

This conversation was the beginning of a firm friendship and close business association that was to continue almost twenty-five years, and it was terminated only with Long's death in *1930*.

In *1912*, the Grandin-Coast manager again called upon the Weyerhaeuser official. "Do you recall," he asked, "a conversation we had six years ago in which we arrived at an understanding about the Snoqualmie timber?"

"Indeed I do," answered Long, and recited the agreement verbatim. When his caller went on to say that his people thought it was time to put a sawmill in the tract, Long responded, "We will sell you our timber or will be willing to merge the two tracts. It's up to you, O. D." (By this time, Ollie was generally so called.)

"Grandin-Coast would prefer to merge properties," replied O. D.

"Then we're merged."

That is how the Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company was formed. Grandin-Coast had about a one-third interest and Weyerhaeuser about two-thirds,[4] as their respective timber holdings in the area were in that approximate proportion. George S. Long was elected president and O. D. Fisher vice-president and treasurer. The company was formed for the purpose of producing lumber, and one of the first questions was the selection of a manager. Willard Warren's name was proposed, and there was a quick meeting of minds. His record at the Four L was well known all through the lumber industry, and Frederick E. Weyerhaeuser and George S. Long shared an admiration for his ability and integrity.

Willard and Lula were glad to move, for several reasons: The new company would be much larger than the Four

L, there would be greater business opportunities in the Pacific Northwest than in Louisiana, the Seattle schools were superior to those in the South, and finally the family would again be reunited. It is not difficult to surmise that the last-named reason also occurred to the family patriarch. O. W. was never so absorbed in business that he could lose sight of an opportunity to hold his family together.

Although it had been the intention of the men who organized Grandin-Coast to engage in the production of lumber, the circumstances related here caused it to become primarily a timber company. The original acreage was added to by the purchase of various small tracts in the valley from individual owners. Its main function after *1914* was its ownership of approximately one-third of Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company.[5] In addition, Grandin-Coast continued to own scattered timber tracts too remote from Snoqualmie Falls to be included in the merged property. O. D. continued as Grandin-Coast manager until *1922*, when he was elected president to succeed his father. The company continued in existence until *1948*, when it was merged into Weyerhaeuser.

Thus it was that the Fishers entered the lumber business in the Pacific Northwest. Their timing was almost perfect. They and their old Missouri associates acquired at moderate cost a substantial acreage of old-growth timber of excellent quality. It proved to be one of the choicest timber properties on the Coast. In point of size, Grandin-Coast was not in a class with such giants as Pope and Talbot or Weyerhaeuser, but it nevertheless was a concern of considerable importance. Cordz-Fisher had been no miniscule enterprise in its day, and Four L was twice as large; but the two of them combined were dwarfed by this new concern, just as the pine trees of Missouri and Louisiana were overshadowed by the magnificent Douglas firs of the Cascade slopes.

viii

Early Seattle Years

Fisher migration to the Puget Sound country began inconspicuously. It was late in *1905* that Will P. Fisher entered business in Seattle by organizing the Fisher Trading Company. It was a one-man concern for several years. In fact, Will P. *was* the Fisher Trading Company. It was the vehicle through which he ran a flour brokerage business.

The proprietor of Fisher Trading Company was distinctly a low-pressure salesman; he had none of the attributes of a hotshot operator. The wholesale grocers and bakers in and around Seattle soon learned, however, that Will P. was transparently and painfully honest and that he knew his line of goods extremely well. The result was that he established a wide clientele in the trade and his business prospered. He was doing quite well within two or three years.

O. D. followed his older brother in the summer of *1906*, soon after his appointment as manager of the new Grandin-Coast Lumber Company, in the organization of which he had played such a spectacular role. He and Will P. shared offices for a time in the Pacific Building. O. D. was often away on timber-cruising expeditions, some in behalf of Grandin-Coast and others for members of the Missouri group whose thirst for timber property had not been satisfied by their share of the Snoqualmie Valley purchases.

The newcomers who were destined to be numbered in future years among the first citizens of Seattle found that city to be a booming place. It had a population of about one hundred thirty-five thousand when they arrived, but only a quarter of a century earlier it was a town of less than four thousand strung along the waterfront. In the early days, Tacoma had been designated as the great city of the Pacific Northwest, the designation having been made by Northern Pacific officials who invested heavily in real estate there. For fourteen years, the company refused to extend its tracks beyond Tacoma, and Seattle had no railroad until *1887*. In that year, a reluctant Northern Pacific built into the city, largely because James J. Hill had promised to build his Great Northern to the Elliott Bay area, which he did in *1893*.

Washington had about four hundred thousand inhabitants in *1905*, considerably more than half of them living in the Puget Sound region, and it had then been a state but sixteen years. It had narrowly escaped becoming a part of Canada, as Great Britain claimed title to the whole area north of the Columbia River by virtue of voyages of discovery late in the eighteenth century. An international squabble ensued, and American ownership was established only after difficult negotiations.[1] That was in *1846*, when the region had no more than a few score of white inhabitants and a great deal of it had not even been explored. In the same decade, O. W. Fisher was born, and only a little more than six decades later his sons were engaged in business in Washington in a city which would soon be a metropolis.

In *1905*, the Alaska Building was the foremost business address in Seattle, and the downtown office building district was chiefly along Second Avenue and in that area. At that time, Third Avenue had been graded only as far uptown as Marion Street, and Fourth Avenue had not even been graded. Seneca Street had not been dedicated, and O. D. remembers that in *1906* Jersey cows were grazing back of the White Building, on a hill where the Olympic Hotel now stands. A hill one hundred twenty feet high then graced the spot where the Washington Hotel was later erected.

Also in *1905*, a heated controversy raged over the name of the great mountain which dominated the eastern skyline of Seattle and Tacoma. It was called Rainier in *1792* by its discoverer, Captain George Vancouver, but ninety years later the Northern Pacific Railway decided that it should be known as Mount Tacoma. There were more than four decades of debate, the burden of which fell upon the two cities. To most of the remainder of the nation it did not seem to make much difference whether the mountain be named for an obscure British rear admiral, or whether one of several Salish Indian names be adopted, but in Western Washington the issue was deadly serious. Throughout the controversy, the National Board on Geographic Names maintained a stand in favor of Rainier as the correct name, and this position was confirmed in *1925*, when Congress refused to intervene.

The three great industries of the Pacific Northwest centered in Seattle – shipping, fisheries, and lumbering. The inauguration of transcontinental rail service caused immense quantities of goods to move over its docks, bound for or arriving from Europe, South America, Asia and the islands of the Pacific. It was the home port for a considerable part of the salmon fishing fleet. Washington's lumber industry first gained the premier position among the states in *1905*, the year before Grandin-Coast Lumber Company was formed, and for a long time each year added to the lead which it had over its rivals in this field. These flourishing businesses, the discovery of gold in Alaska and the rapid rise of the fruit industry and of farm production in Washington all combined to make Seattle grow at an astonishing rate. The city gained one hundred thousand new residents during the first five years after the Fishers became Seattleites, the forests were driven back to the city limits, then the limits moved outward and the forests were forced back again and again. In the process of cutting down the hills in Seattle, more than thirty-one billion yards of dirt were moved, largely by hydraulic action. The tide flats were built up above water level by this means, and they provided land for a considerable part of the Seattle industrial area.

Under the booming conditions which pervaded Seattle at the time the Fishers arrived and for years afterward, there were many fine opportunities for business men with ability and integrity to forge ahead. The Fishers were in this situation; they had substantial funds of their own, and they were associated with others who were as well or even better endowed than they. The reputation for acumen which O. W. had established was being continued by his sons. With O. D. spearheading the family efforts, and with the counsel of the sage old head of O. W., they moved rapidly ahead in the business community of Seattle.

During the first year of his residence in Seattle, O. D. purchased a modest interest in the Metropolitan Building

Company, in the form of bonds with a common stock bonus. This concern had fifty-year leases on downtown lots which were part of the endowment of the University of Washington, and it began to erect and operate office buildings on this ground. O. D. became interested in Metropolitan through friendships with C. F. White,[2] Puget Sound manager for Pope and Talbot, the great lumber company, and J. F. Douglas, who was Metropolitan manager for many years. O. D.'s association with White and Douglas brought him into contact with Horace C. Henry, a native of Vermont who had made a great fortune as a railroad builder. Henry was gradually transferring his activities from railroad construction to Seattle real estate and other businesses. He was one of the city's leading citizens in good works as well as in wealth. He, too, was in the Metropolitan group, and his name and White's honored one of the office buildings.[3]

Not long after O. D.'s entry into Metropolitan, J. L. Grandin was in Seattle seeking investment opportunities. Having heard of Metropolitan, the eastern capitalist investigated thoroughly on his own and arrived at a conclusion. He said, "Ollie, come along with me to their office. E. B. and I are prepared to put a million dollars apiece into Metropolitan, but only on condition that you are elected as vice president and treasurer."

That was pretty heady wine to pour for a thirty-one year old youngster, but there was more to come. A year or so later, J. L. asked O. D. to cruise a timber tract in Oregon and advise on its purchase, which involved another million dollars or more. The gist of the report was that the property might be worth the price, but that the Grandins could obtain much more timber for their money by buying Weyerhaeuser stock; this recommendation ran back to the great bargain which Weyerhaeuser had obtained in the purchase a few years earlier of the Northern Pacific timberlands. The Grandins invested substantial sums in Weyerhaeuser stock, and in the course of time most of the Missouri group did likewise.

A move in a different direction took place in June *1907*, following a call which O. D. had from Morris A. Arnold, an ex-Missourian with whom he had been acquainted at Birch Tree. Arnold had been a banker in Missouri, and then state bank examiner; during the six years preceding the call, he had been vice-president of the First National Bank of Billings, Montana. Arnold's brother-in-law was David H. Moss, who headed a bank in Mount Vernon, Washington. The purpose of the call was to inform O. D. that Arnold and Moss, along with J. A. Hall, vice-president of the First National Bank of Seattle, were in the process of acquiring management control of the Seattle institution and they asked O. D. to join them. The group purchased the holdings of Lester Turner and ex-Governor John H. McGraw. Arnold was elected president of the bank and Moss vice-president on July *3*, *1907*, and the following January O. D. was elected to the board of directors.

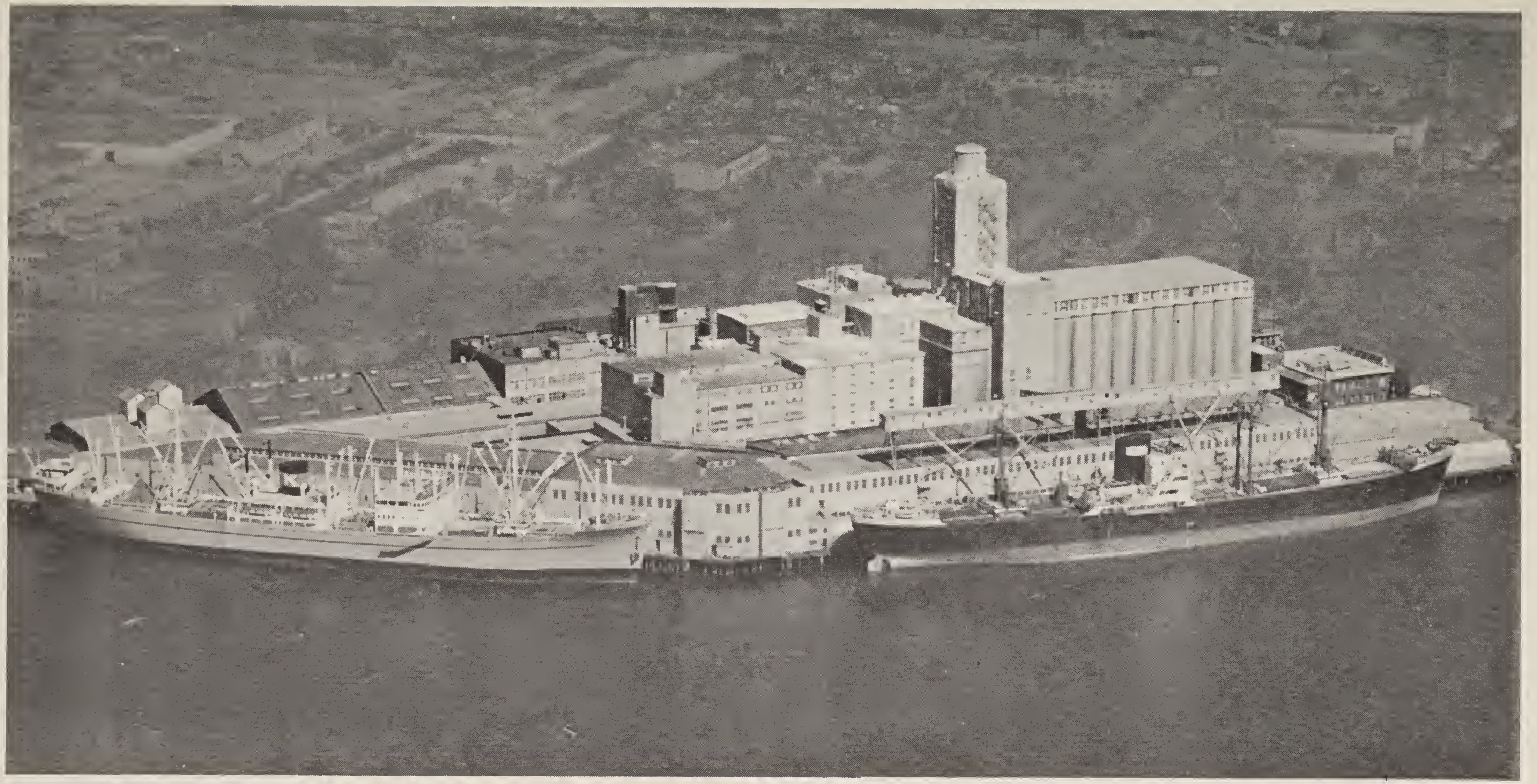
A year after the First National purchase, O. D. found himself a director of a second bank. He had a phone call one evening which went about like this: "O. D., this is H. C. Henry. Just thought I'd tell you that we are organizing a bank in the Metropolitan area and that you are going to be one of the directors. Good-bye!" This was the Metropolitan National Bank which was merged some twenty years later with the Seattle-First National Bank.

The bank association led into the next Fisher enterprise. In *1910*, an officer of the First National told O. D. that the bank had been obliged to foreclose on eleven lots in the tide flat district on Fourth Avenue South, the owner having decided that they were worth less than the loan he had on them. The bank wanted to dispose of the property. The result was the organization of Fisher-White-Henry Company, which acquired the lots and finished filling them from the Jackson and Dearborn Street hills which were then being sluiced down. Some years later, business buildings were erected on the lots. Seattleites will identify the property from the fact that Arden Farms Company's plant has occupied a part of the ground for many years.

The largest move of all was initiated in *1909*. One day in April, O. W. and O. D. were crossing Second Avenue at Yesler Way, and the father stopped midway. He exclaimed, "Ollie, look at the ships in the harbor! This is the place for a flour mill! We would have a free right of way to the world!" That conversation led to the organization of Fisher Flouring Mills Company a few months later. A milling plant was built and flour production began on April *15*, *1911*, although the formal opening of the mill did not take place until June *1* of that year.

The intention had been to put up a mill of five hundred barrels daily capacity, to be wholly owned by the Fishers just as Gallatin Valley had been. This plan was changed largely at the instance of their old Missouri associates. Dan Dulany spearheaded this demand. Said he: "Only five hundred barrels! Why, a mill of that size won't keep Ollie busy half the time!" The result was that the size of the new mill was increased to two thousand barrels. O. W. Fisher was elected president of the new company and O. D. secretary and manager.

It may be well to take a bird's eye view of the Fisher business empire when the flour mill was launched. O. W. owned a sizable part of Four L and was its president. Willard was general manager of that company. O. W. also had comparatively minor holdings in the three White-controlled



. . . this is the place for a flour mill . . . a free right of way to the world! . . .

companies in Louisiana, and was a director of each. The only other eastern interest was in National Livestock and Mining Company, which had two small iron mines in Missouri. O. W. was president and O. D. manager.

Gallatin Valley Milling Company was owned by O. W. and his sons, with the father having by far the largest part. In addition to the Belgrade mill, Gallatin Valley now had a line of country grain elevators. Dan was manager of Gallatin Valley. O. W. owned a business block in Bozeman and was a heavy stockholder in a bank there. Fisher Mercantile Company, of which Burr was president after *1905*, was dissolved in *1910*, when the ownership of its last store went to a concern called Chambers-Fisher Mercantile Company; the Fishers had a stock interest in the latter, but no management responsibility. Except for participation in the Chambers concern, they were out of the variety store business for the first time in twenty years.

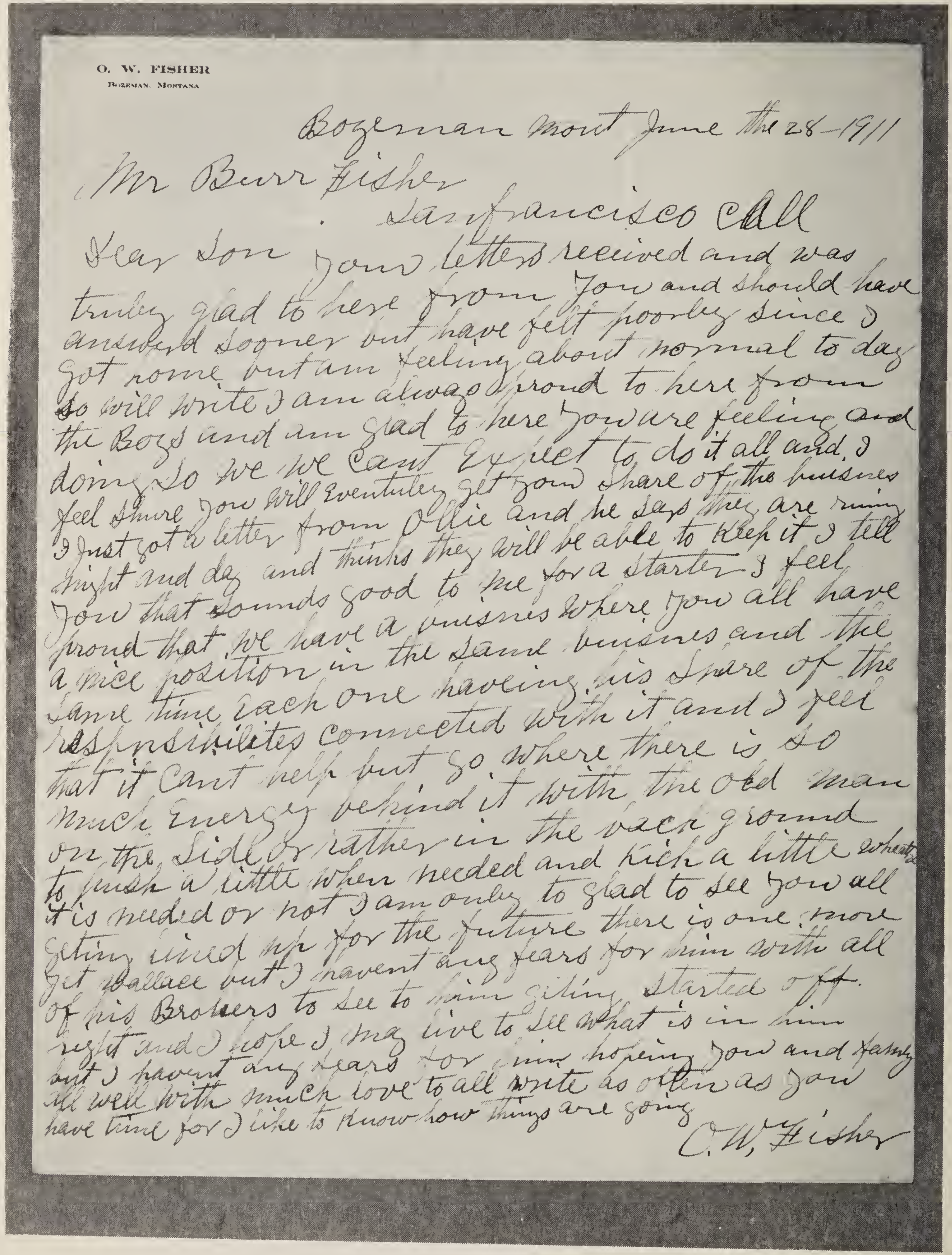
The largest Fisher interests in Washington were Grandin-Coast Lumber Company and Fisher Flouring Mills Company, and O. W. was president of both. He was also president of Fisher-White-Henry Company. He was a heavy stockholder in all three concerns, and O. D. was manager of them all. O. D. was a director in two Seattle banks and an officer and director of Metropolitan Building Company. The family had a moderate stock interest in the banks and building company. Will P., Burr and O. D. were all directors of Fisher Flouring Mills Company and Gallatin Valley Milling Company, and Dan was a director of Gallatin Valley.

Will P. became treasurer and sales manager of Fisher Flouring Mills Company, that new concern receiving the benefit of his excellent following in the flour trade in Seattle and elsewhere which had been built up out of his dealings with them through Fisher Trading Company. However, the trading company remained in existence and later it was converted into a personal holding company. There is reason to believe that Will P. took a sacrifice in income when he joined the milling company, as his brokerage business was flourishing. If he did, it was because of the Fisher principle that the welfare of the family ranks ahead of the welfare of any individual member.

Burr left Bozeman after fourteen years' residence and took charge of flour sales in California. It was his first experience in any phase of the milling business. He made San Francisco his home and headquarters. It is probable that Will P. and Burr came into the company at the instance of their father, who cherished the hope that his sons should be associated in business.

It was an unwritten rule in the family that when any of them turned up an attractive business deal it was to be available to all and not limited to the one who found or developed it. This was parallel to the basis on which O. W. had worked for a long time with Captain White, the Grandins, Dulanys and others; and which he had followed for a full generation with Judge Barnett and the Cordz brothers. There were few occasions when the Fishers did not observe this rule among themselves. All of them including Willard Warren thus owned stock in most of the companies in which any of them had an interest; usually it was only a few shares as a token participation, but in several cases it was substantial. O. D.'s range of business interests was considerably broader than that of any other member of his generation, and that was likewise true of his management responsibilities.

In *1911*, the four oldest Fisher sons had reached executive status, and Willard Warren was likewise in that category. Although they were only from thirty-two to forty-two in age, they were all discharging heavy responsibilities in the



O. W. FISHER
Bozeman, Montana

Bozeman Mont June the 28-1911

Mr Burr Fisher
San francisco Cal

Dear Son Your letters received and was
truley glad to here from You and should have
answerd sooner but have felt poorly since I
got home but am feeling about normal to day
so will write I am always proud to here from
the Boys and am glad to here you are feeling and
doing so we we Cant Expect to do it all and I
feel shure you will Eventuley get your share of the buisnes
I just got a letter from Ollie and he says they are runing
night and day and thinks they will be able to keep it I tell
you that sounds good to me for a starter I feel
proud that we have a buisnes where you all have
a nice position in the same buisnes and the
same time each one having his share of the
responsibilites connected with it and I feel
that it Cant help but go where there is so
much Energy behind it with the old man
on the side or rather in the back ground
to push a little when needed and kick a little whether
it is needed or not I am only to glad to see you all
geting lined up for the future there is one more
yet Wallace but I havent any fears for him with all
of his Brothers to see to him geting started off
right and I hope I may live to see what is in him
but I havent any fears for him hoping you and family
all well with much love to all write as often as you
have time for I like to know how things are going

O. W. Fisher

. . . Dear Son . . . write as often as you have time . . . I like to know how things are going . . .

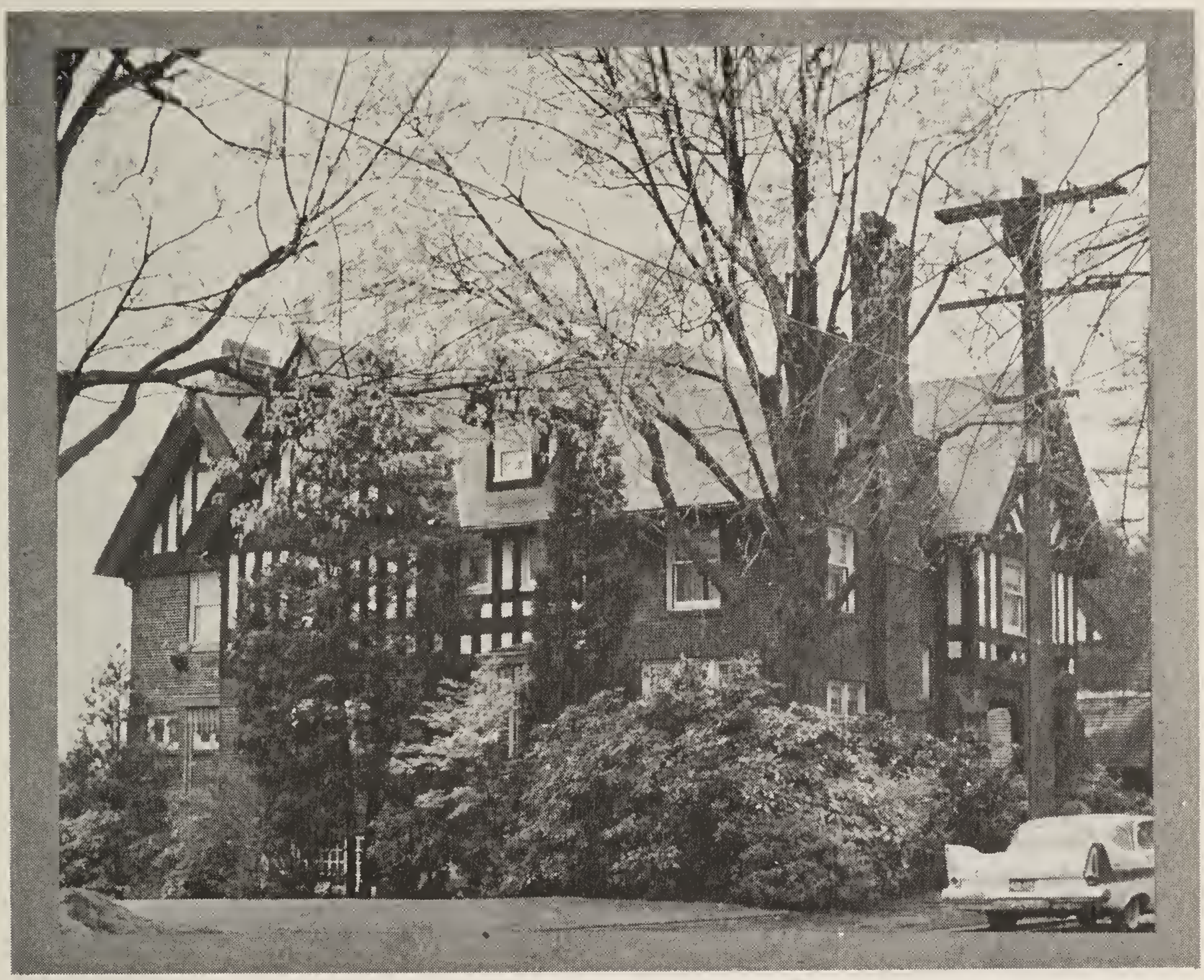
business world. O. W. visited them all quite frequently, and he kept track of everything of importance which transpired anywhere in his empire. Few major decisions were made without his concurrence, although direct management was mainly in the hands of the next generation.

ix

Last Years of the Founders

The last of the three great moves westward in O. W. Fisher's life took place in *1914*. By that time, O. W.'s major business interests were centered in Seattle, and then there was the magnet of four of their six children – Will P., O. D., Lula and Wallace – and of nine of their twelve grandchildren. A fine new home was built at *1039* Belmont Place, on a choice location on Capitol Hill, next door to the home occupied since *1909* by O. D. and Nellie. It was only a few blocks to Will P.'s home, and when Willard and Lula and their boys arrived from Louisiana they lived at the home of her parents until they also located nearby.

O. W. was no stranger to Seattle. From the time Grandin Coast was organized in *1906*, he had been there several times



. . . a fine new home was built
at 1039 Belmont Place . . .

a year; and his visits were considerably more frequent after the formation of Fisher Flouring Mills Company in *1910*. He was president of both these great concerns, and although the management was in the capable hands of his son O. D., nevertheless the father took a lively part in the formulation of policies. He was a past master in the art of delegating authority and then not interfering with the man who had the work to do, but as the elder statesman of the outfit he liked to be around enough to keep a running account of what was going on.

In those days, the Fisher offices were in the White Building, and it was not until *1916* that an office was built at the mill. O. D. had been the general manager of the milling company from the day it was organized, and it was his practice to oversee everything to a minute degree, in addition to discharging his responsibilities as a director of seven or eight other corporations. The milling company had begun earning profits during its first year and it continued to do so; these earnings were not comparable to the bonanza income which the lumber companies brought in during the good years in that business, as flour mills seldom enjoy that experience, but the company had become well-established in the three years since the great corrugated rolls had begun converting wheat into flour in the mill on Harbor Island, across the bay from downtown Seattle.

Will P. was treasurer and sales manager, and the mill had obtained a fine running start from the business he had built up through Fisher Trading Company. It seems strange now, but at that time the major efforts in the domestic market were directed at building up the household flour business. In fact, this constituted a considerable majority of the total domestic volume during the first years. Will P. devoted most of his time to the Pacific Northwest, as affairs in California were being handled by his brother Burr. The brothers were responsible for all domestic sales.

O. D. was also fortunate in his choice of other key personnel. William Stanley Allen was the first employe, a man with a wealth of experience in the flour business beyond the continental limits of the United States. It had been the intention to make him assistant manager, but Stanley's great knowledge of overseas business made it almost inevitable that he would concentrate in that field. Then, too, there was a youngster named William H. Irvine, who had kept Will P.'s books at the Trading Company. He rose rapidly in the organization and long before his untimely death in *1928* he became O. D.'s right hand man. Finally, there was Thomas E. Fowler, an eccentric autocrat who had a thorough knowledge of plant operation. There were others who advanced in due course to positions of responsibility, but the original group of men in key positions are those named here.

It was in *1914* also that Willard had come up from Louisiana, where he had a great record of achievement in the management of the Four L. He now took over the management of the new Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company, formed to cut and sell the lumber from the merged tracts of timber in the Snoqualmie Valley that had been owned by Grandin-Coast and Weyerhaeuser. The initial step was the construction of the second all-electric sawmill in the nation. A couple of years were required to erect the mill, build roads and prepare the woods, but when Snoqualmie Falls reached the production stage it began turning out more than eighty million feet of fine lumber annually and this rate was maintained for many years. Lumbermen travelled from far and near to see this marvel.

Because of the Weyerhaeuser predominance in the ownership of Snoqualmie Falls, that great company attended to a large part of the marketing and Willard was enabled to concentrate mainly on production and general management, although he also supervised sales. His previous reputation as a leading lumberman was enhanced by his performance at Snoqualmie. Although the timber acreage there was less than three per cent of the total owned by Weyerhaeuser Timber Company, the Snoqualmie lumber production was more than a quarter of the Weyerhaeuser output on the West Coast. The amount and the quality of this lumber gave Weyerhaeuser entree to many markets of importance which the company had not previously reached.

Willard had served his apprenticeship in the Missouri Ozarks, had become experienced and established his competence in Louisiana and now was nearing the top of his profession. He was a fairly short, heavy man who was equally at home with the roughnecks in the woods and sawmill and with the men of affairs who sat on the board of directors of the company.

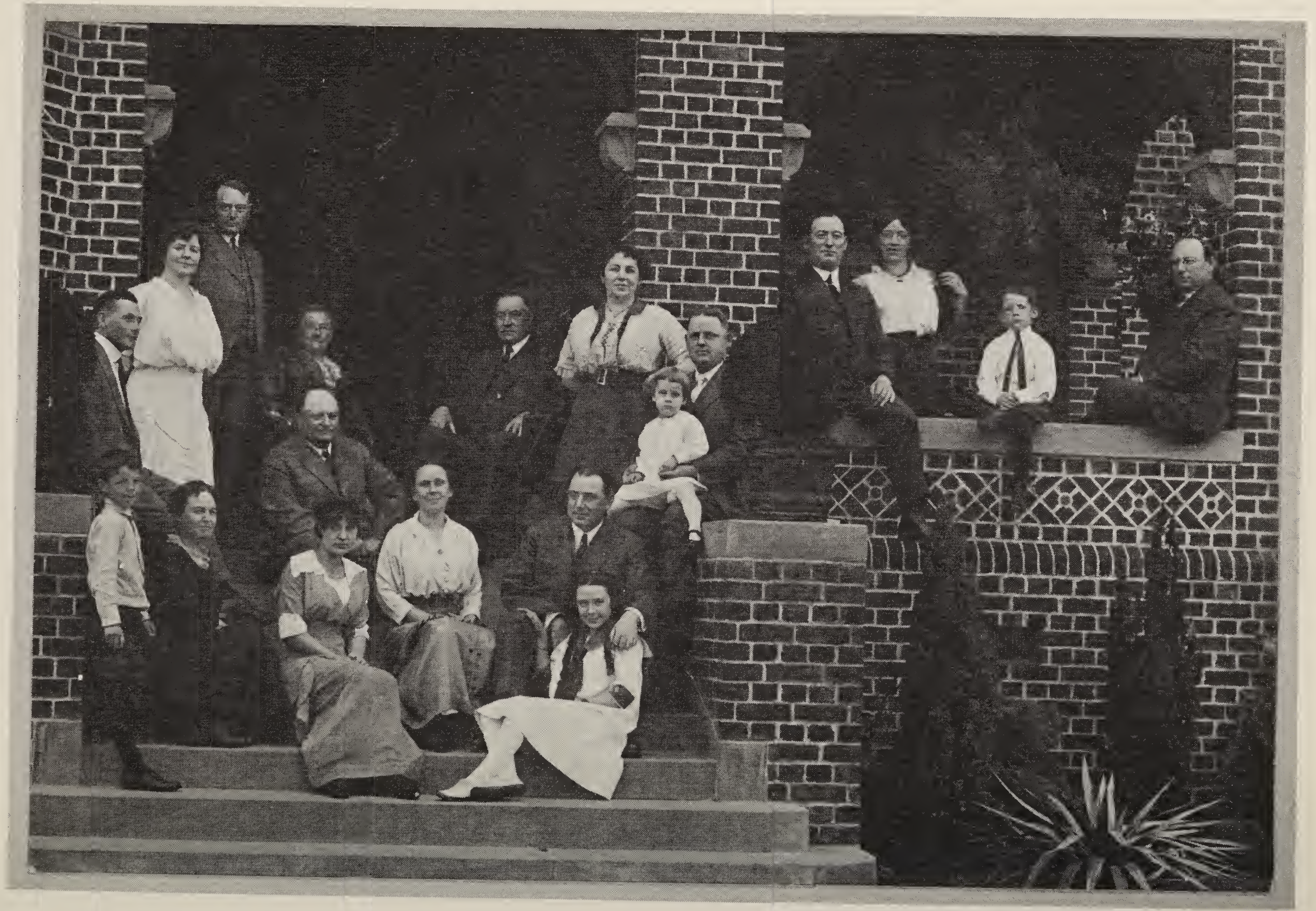
Lula was a true Fisher. She was as strong-minded as her parents and her brothers. She had the grace and the prestige and the wealth to move in any circle she might have chosen, but the things that were uppermost in her mind were her husband, her children, her home and her church, and they were enough to absorb the major part of her great energies.

Wallace had thought of applying his engineering training to the lumber industry, but instead he became a bakery flour salesman when he returned from Cornell in mid-summer *1914*. He took a territory in and around Seattle and Tacoma for a year and a half, but on January *1, 1916,* he went to Belgrade to be manager of the Gallatin Valley mill, taking charge of both production and sales. He was married on June *28, 1916,* to Vivien Swalwell, daughter of one of Everett's pioneer families. Her mother was the first white woman to live in Everett, and her father laid out the Everett townsite. Her uncle Joseph who started as a messenger in the First National Bank of Everett as a youngster, later became president of the Seattle-First National Bank. The young people continued to live at Belgrade until the spring of *1918*, when Wallace enlisted as a second-class seaman. He was later sent to ground school and earned his ensign's commission. He was stationed for a time in New Jersey and then at the Boeing plant in Seattle.

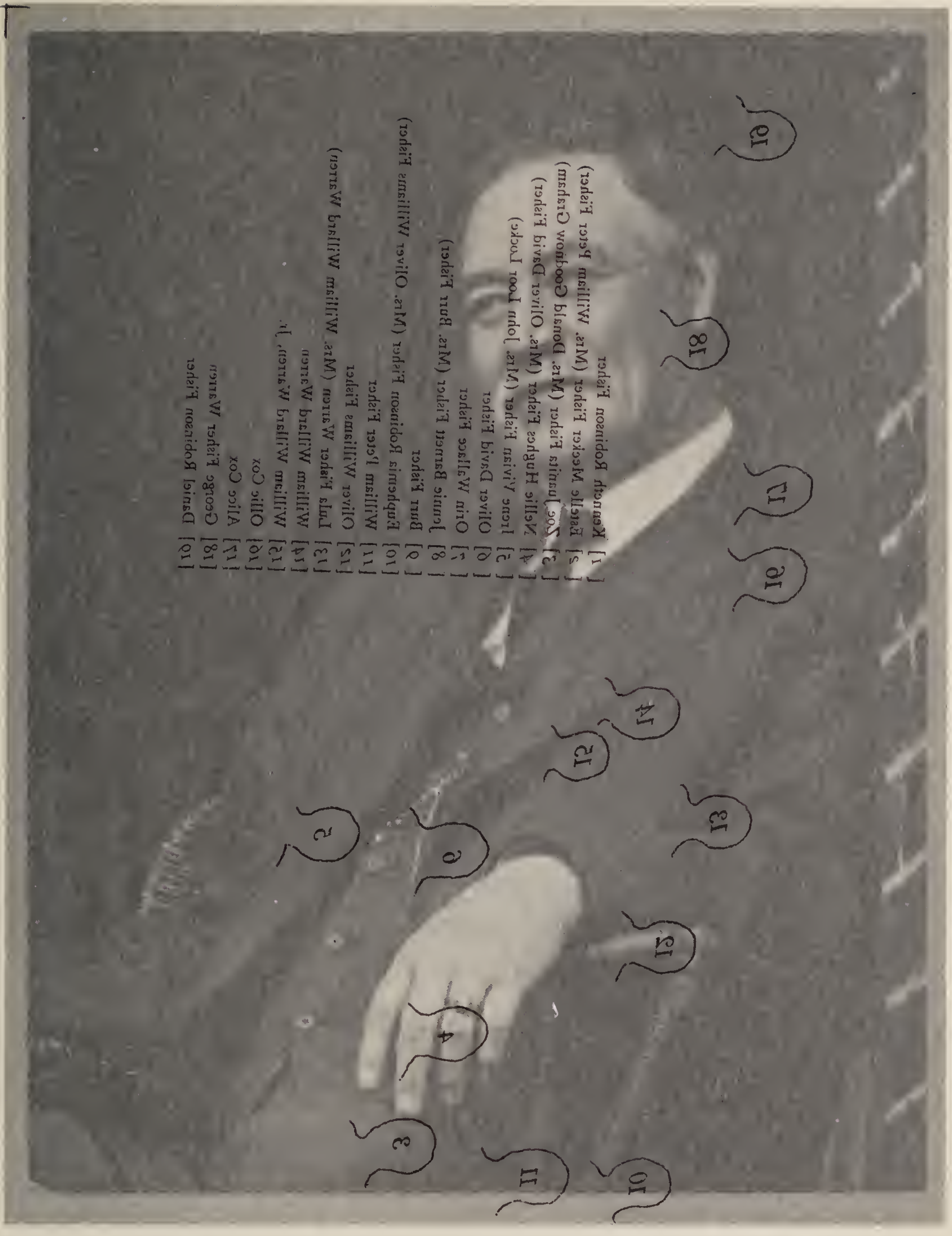
Two Fisher grandsons also saw service in that war. David, eldest son of Will P. and Estelle, enlisted on the day war was declared, went to officers' candidate school, was commissioned as a lieutenant in a machine gun battalion and then went to France, but the war ended before he saw action. Barnett, eldest son of Burr and Jennie, enlisted in the quartermaster corps, and in due course he found himself serving as a baker in France. Although in a non-combat unit, he had the misfortune to be caught in a practice artillery barrage and in getting to cover he broke his ankle and suffered leg damage. Due to having the ankle reset and to several bouts of pneumonia, he had a long hospital siege and weighed only one hundred five pounds when he returned to California.

Meanwhile in Montana, Dan was managing Gallatin Valley affairs and that small milling company was extending its country elevator business as time went on. He had become one of the leading men in the wheat business in that state.

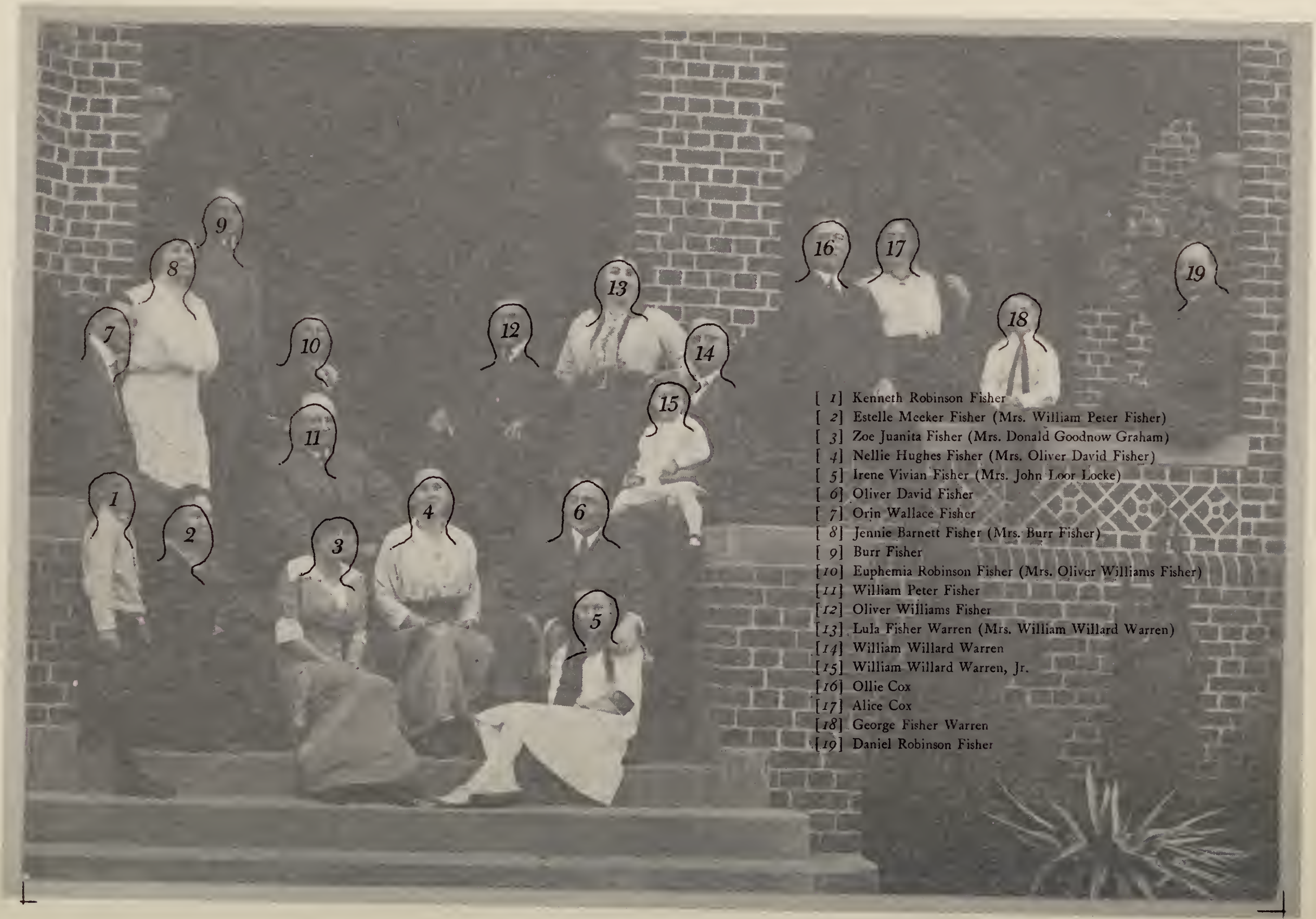
June *11*, *1917*, was a memorable day in the O. W. Fisher household, for it was the golden wedding anniversary of O. W. and Euphemia. There was a great celebration, which was attended by all their six children and most of their grandchildren. O. W. was not much given to looking backward, but he could have been pardoned for pondering on that day on how far in life he and Euphemia had come since



. . . *June 11, 1917, was a memorable day . . . it was the golden wedding anniversary of O. W. and Euphemia . . .*



. . . pondering on that day on how far
in life he and Euphemia had come . . .



[1] Kenneth Robinson Fisher
[2] Estelle Meeker Fisher (Mrs. William Peter Fisher)
[3] Zoe Juanita Fisher (Mrs. Donald Goodnow Graham)
[4] Nellie Hughes Fisher (Mrs. Oliver David Fisher)
[5] Irene Vivian Fisher (Mrs. John Loor Locke)
[6] Oliver David Fisher
[7] Orin Wallace Fisher
[8] Jennie Barnett Fisher (Mrs. Burr Fisher)
[9] Burr Fisher
[10] Euphemia Robinson Fisher (Mrs. Oliver Williams Fisher)
[11] William Peter Fisher
[12] Oliver Williams Fisher
[13] Lula Fisher Warren (Mrs. William Willard Warren)
[14] William Willard Warren
[15] William Willard Warren, Jr.
[16] Ollie Cox
[17] Alice Cox
[18] George Fisher Warren
[19] Daniel Robinson Fisher

. . . June 11, 1917, was a memorable day . . . it was the golden wedding anniversary of O. W. and Euphemia . . .

. . . pondering on that day on how far
in life he and Euphemia had come . . .

that far-off time in Ontario when they were married, not long after the close of the Civil War.

During the Montana years, O. W. had reduced his business responsibilities somewhat. This may not have been in deference to his age. In Bozeman he was far distant from the scene of action in all the bigger companies in which he was interested. Here he had only Gallatin Valley, his business property and the local bank; his major enterprises were in Seattle and Louisiana. O. D. was managing the Washington concerns, Willard the Four L. Although neither of these young men had reached forty before O. W. left Montana, he had great confidence in them. This is illustrated by a wire he sent Willard in reply to a letter outlining a major problem which required action; he said, "You know more about this than I do. Your decision will be my decision." He followed events closely in the various companies, but he expected the managers to run them, but with due regard for the policies laid down by the directors.

After O. W. became a Seattle resident, he attained semiretirement even more definitely than before. He had an office with the milling company, and an old employe has described his typical day thus: "Mr. Fisher was known to everyone as the Old Gentleman. He customarily arrived at the office between ten and eleven. Almost invariably he went first to the cashier, where he asked about the bank balance and then about receipts of money and possible disbursements. Next he went to the sales desk to get a line on what was going on there. After that he inquired about the course of the wheat market. He read all the cables and telegrams. He signed most of the checks. He had a nap after lunch and then he usually toured a part of the plant. He appeared to be very gruff and distant, and all of the younger staff members were afraid of him, but actually he was more benign than they thought. Now and then he would visit with someone, but that was the exception rather than the rule. He did not take up much of the senior employes' time, probably because he figured they were busy. He had a good idea of what was going on all over the place, but he was a watchdog and not an operator. He was always consulted on all major expenditures but had little to do with day-to-day operations. He left for the day before four."

Five more grandchildren appeared on the scene during this era. They were Peter, son of Will P. and Estelle, born January 23, 1920; George Oliver, son of Dan and May, born May 5, 1918; John Oliver, son of Willard and Lula, born April 25, 1916; Susanne, daughter of Wallace and Vivien, born April 19, 1920 and her sister Jean Elizabeth, born October 15, 1922. All were born in Seattle except George, and he arrived in Great Falls. That made a total of seventeen, although the grandparents never saw Jean Elizabeth. The first great-grandchild was Richard Fisher Graham, born May 26, 1920, in faraway Massachusetts, son of Donald G. Graham and Juanita. His birth of course made grandparents of O. D. and Nellie.

In 1918, Burr was transferred from San Francisco to Seattle, to be milling company superintendent. He also continued to keep an eye on California sales, although by remote control, and when Will P. was absent because of illness, as was the case on two rather lengthy occasions, Burr acted as sales manager in his place. He did not have the formal title of assistant manager, but to a certain extent he acted in that capacity.

Dan's headquarters were moved in 1919 from Great Falls to Spokane, in order to enable him to look after the country elevator operations in Eastern Washington as well as in Montana.

When Wallace returned from Navy service early in *1919*, he went to Bellingham, where the company leased a small flour mill. He took charge there and at Mount Vernon, where another old mill had been acquired and converted into a rolled oats plant. After a couple of years, the Bellingham lease was given up and he then moved to Mount Vernon for about an equal period of time.

In *1920*, O. D. and Nellie, accompanied by Irene and the Stanley Allens made a two months' tour of Western Europe. It was the first of several foreign trips for them, but the subsequent trips were all in the Orient.

The Fisher empire grew all through the half-decade which straddled World War I. The flour mill capacity was increased from two thousand to four thousand barrels daily, and although normal outlets were disturbed considerably as a backwash of the war, new outlets were opened up with large shipments to Europe, for example. There was a very large overrun on Snoqualmie Falls timber, being as much as a third above the admittedly conservative estimates. The Seattle business district had migrated right into the area where Metropolitan operated. All the concerns in which the family was interested were doing well.

Then in *1921* came a disastrous blow when the wheat market declined approximately one-half within six months or so. The loss to the milling company on its normal and necessary inventory was staggering,[1] but it was compounded by apparently unauthorized and excessive purchases by the grain department and the charter of a vessel to move a great cargo to Europe. The total loss suffered by the company was more than a million and a quarter dollars, and it might have become insolvent had not its stockholders subscribed to a large issue of preferred stock. Almost fifteen years were to go by before all the preferred was retired.

Euphemia's health began to decline around *1918*, and thereafter she was confined to her bed a large share of the time. She had a major heart attack late in *1919*. The strain upon her heart for years, occasioned by her efforts to move around despite the repeated fractures of her kneecap, may well have contributed to her condition. The plucky little woman was courageous throughout her long illness, just as she had been all her life, but she finally passed away on March *2*, *1921*, in the Belmont Place home.

The loss of Euphemia was a hard blow to O. W., even though it had been expected for a year and a half. Wholly unexpected was the death less than six weeks later of Willard Warren. He suffered a heart attack in his office in the White Building on April *11*, *1921*, and died within a few minutes. He had a hard time in the influenza epidemic of *1918*, and a heart weakness developed as a result but it had not been detected. In an editorial, a trade publication declared that the American lumber industry had lost its foremost member. A great tribute was paid to Willard when the Snoqualmie Falls employes, at their own initiative and without any suggestion from the management, obtained a granite boulder and set it on the company grounds in tribute to his memory. In dedicating it, George S. Long declared that "Willard Warren has been years ahead of the rest of us in the lumber business."

The double blow which was struck at his family circle affected O. W. greatly, and he never thereafter took much part in business. His health began to give way in the fall of *1921*, and the trouble was finally diagnosed as diabetes. He spent the winter in California largely in the company of his old friends J. B. Barnett and H. H. Smalley of Humansville fame, and he seemed improved when he went home in the spring. However, in a short time his illness returned with complications, and the gallant old warrior passed away on June *22*, *1922*, also in the Belmont Place home. He was only three months away from his eightieth birthday.

O. W. Fisher had had a spectacular career that epitomized the America of his day. Born in poverty and virtually without education, he rose solely through his own efforts to a proud position in the world. The boy who had to give up his school books at the age of eight to keep bread on his mother's table had become a great captain of industry, respected without reservation by all who had in any way been associated with him.

X

The Second Generation

With one exception, the sons of O. W. Fisher were middle-aged or approaching that stage at the time of his death. Will P. was fifty-three, Burr fifty, O. D. forty-six and Dan very nearly forty-four. The exception was Wallace, then thirty-one. Lula, tragically widowed a year earlier, was forty-one.

Capitol Hill and its environs continued to provide home-sites for a majority of the second generation of Fishers. Lula purchased the place which had belonged to the parents. O. D. was next door, and Will P. nearby. Burr lived in an apartment hotel little more than a mile away, but was planning to build in The Highlands. Only Dan and Wallace were away from the city – in Spokane and Mount Vernon, respectively – but within a year or two both would be in Seattle.

. . . William Peter Fisher . . . born June 5, 1869,
near Louisville, Kentucky . . .

In the course of time, Zenith, a suburban community facing Puget Sound, south of Seattle, became the other end of the Fisher axis. From *1914*, Will P. had a summer place there, called "the farm" because of its five-acre expanse. When Dan moved to the Seattle area, he bought part of the tract and built a year-round home. Later Lula persuaded Will P. to sell her some of the remainder, and the Warrens had a summer home. In *1929*, O. D. bought a nearby country place for a summer residence, and the following year Will P. built a new home on the now abbreviated farm. Wallace's first home was on Capitol Hill.

Long before this time, Will P. had become one of the mainstays of the First Methodist Church in Seattle; he was a member of its official board for more than thirty years, and president of the board for a time. He and Estelle played leading roles in virtually all phases of church activity. In this respect, they were following the course they had taken previously in Boulder and Missoula.

Will P. also took a great interest in the Manufacturers' Association of Washington, and vastly to his astonishment he was chosen as president of the organization in *1925*, after serving several years on the board of directors.

David, eldest son of the Will P. Fishers, had been at Snoqualmie Falls since the end of the war, working for the lumber company. Ben was at Great Falls in the Gallatin Valley organization, but within a year or so he engaged in the grain business for himself at the village of Choteau, Montana. Julia climaxed a brilliant scholastic career by going to China to teach in a mission college.

Will P. was treasurer of the milling company, and in charge of sales, as he had been since the business was founded. At this time, the flour business was going through an extensive change, due to a considerable increase in the bakery trade

. . . Burr Fisher . . . born February 7, 1872,
in Orleans, Missouri . . .

and a corresponding reduction in the household trade. Will P.'s merchandizing experience in the Golden Rule Stores stood him in good stead in selling family flour, and about this time he developed what was called the "handisack", a small package on which the company concentrated its efforts in the household trade for years. He was an excellent personal salesman, but contrary to present practice he did not call on the trade much nor did he travel with his salesmen in their territories. It is possible that his apparent lack of agressiveness was due to the intermittent spells of illness which plagued him for years. For a considerable time, he considered abandoning the business world, feeling that he was not rugged enough physically and mentally to cope with its wearing problems, but he was dissuaded by his wife from doing so.

After seven years of managing California sales, Burr had returned to Seattle in *1918* and taken over the responsibility for production in the mill. He encountered some difficulties in this assignment, partly because of his lack of experience in plant operation, but equally due to the peculiarities of Tom Fowler, the plant superintendent. Fowler had run the mill since the day it opened, and in fact he had helped plan it. It was his life, and he respected no authority except that of the general manager. With almost anyone else, there would have been an open clash, but Burr somehow charmed Fowler into tolerating him and finally into recognizing his orders. Burr looked after sales on several occasions when Will P. was out because of illness, and he was also acting manager during O. D.'s absence on several lengthy business trips abroad.

Burr had an artistic temperament, and all his life he felt a little regret that he had not followed a musical career. Unlike many persons who are primarily artistic, he had sound commercial instincts. It had been his idea which led

. . . Oliver David Fisher . . . born November 29, 1875, in Orleans, Missouri . . .

to the formation of the Golden Rule Syndicate, and he was the leader in the Fisher Mercantile Company. His brother Dan was to say many years later, "Burr did the best job of any of us in running a general store. He was a better money-maker than either Will or I. He had talents in salesmanship and store management which neither of us could equal. He knew everybody and everybody was his friend."

Burr had liked the life of a store proprietor, and gave it up with some reluctance. He was gregarious and personable. He became adept at entertaining, and achieved the status of a gourmet and a connoisseur of wines. Everywhere he went, he quickly built up a large circle of friends.

In *1918*, Burr had a severe attack of influenza during the epidemic, and he never quite recovered from its effects. A little more than a year after his father passed away, a doctor told him pointedly that he had only a few months to live. He and Jennie took a long trip to Europe in an effort to rebuild his health, but only a week after their return he died of a heart attack. That was on September *16*, *1924*.[1]

O. D. was thoroughly immersed in business long before he came to Seattle. It was at once his work, his hobby and his relaxation. In pre-Seattle days, his business assignments had been at lower levels, but from *1906* they were distinctly important even though he was then but a young man. He became manager and a director of Grandin-Coast at thirty; an officer and director of Metropolitan Building Company at thirty-one; a director of the First National Bank at thirty-two; manager and a director of Fisher Flouring Mills Company at thirty-four. Other honors were to come, but it would be more to the point to say more responsibilities.

When O. W. Fisher passed away, he was president of six corporations and a board member of six more. In nearly all cases, O. D. was chosen to take his father's place, and so in

. . . Daniel Robinson Fisher . . . born July 6, 1878,
in Humansville, Missouri . . .

late *1922* he became president of Fisher Flouring Mills Company, Grandin-Coast Lumber Company, Louisiana Long Leaf Lumber Company, National Livestock and Mining Company, the Fisher-White-Henry Company and Gallatin Valley Milling Company. Before the end of that year, he was a director of twenty-six companies, on some of which he had served for years and on others only briefly. Not all these companies were large and important, but a majority of them were.

O. D. was a business man's dream as a corporation director. He made it his job to know everything of consequence which was happening within the corporation of which he was a director; he also made it his business to be thoroughly informed about all events in the industry of which it was a part. Thus he was a faithful and meticulous reader of trade journals, absorbing virtually every word that was printed relative to the various fields in which his companies operated. He likewise studied all the reports which the company managers sent to their directors, and if they were not adequate for his purpose he called for more data. His tremendous memory enabled him to retain nearly all information of consequence, and the result was the accumulation of a storehouse of knowledge about each company and each industry which became invaluable to the boards on which he sat.

O. D. managed Fisher Flouring Mills Company in like manner from the beginning. He worked tremendously long hours, read almost every letter that went out, followed the wheat and flour markets assiduously, conferred with his principal lieutenants constantly, and pretty much ran everything around the place. No detail was too small to be overlooked. It is extremely doubtful whether there was another business man in Seattle who put in such long hours or who accomplished as much as he did.

. . . Lula Christina Fisher Warren . . . born January 18, 1881 . . . in Humansville, Missouri . . .

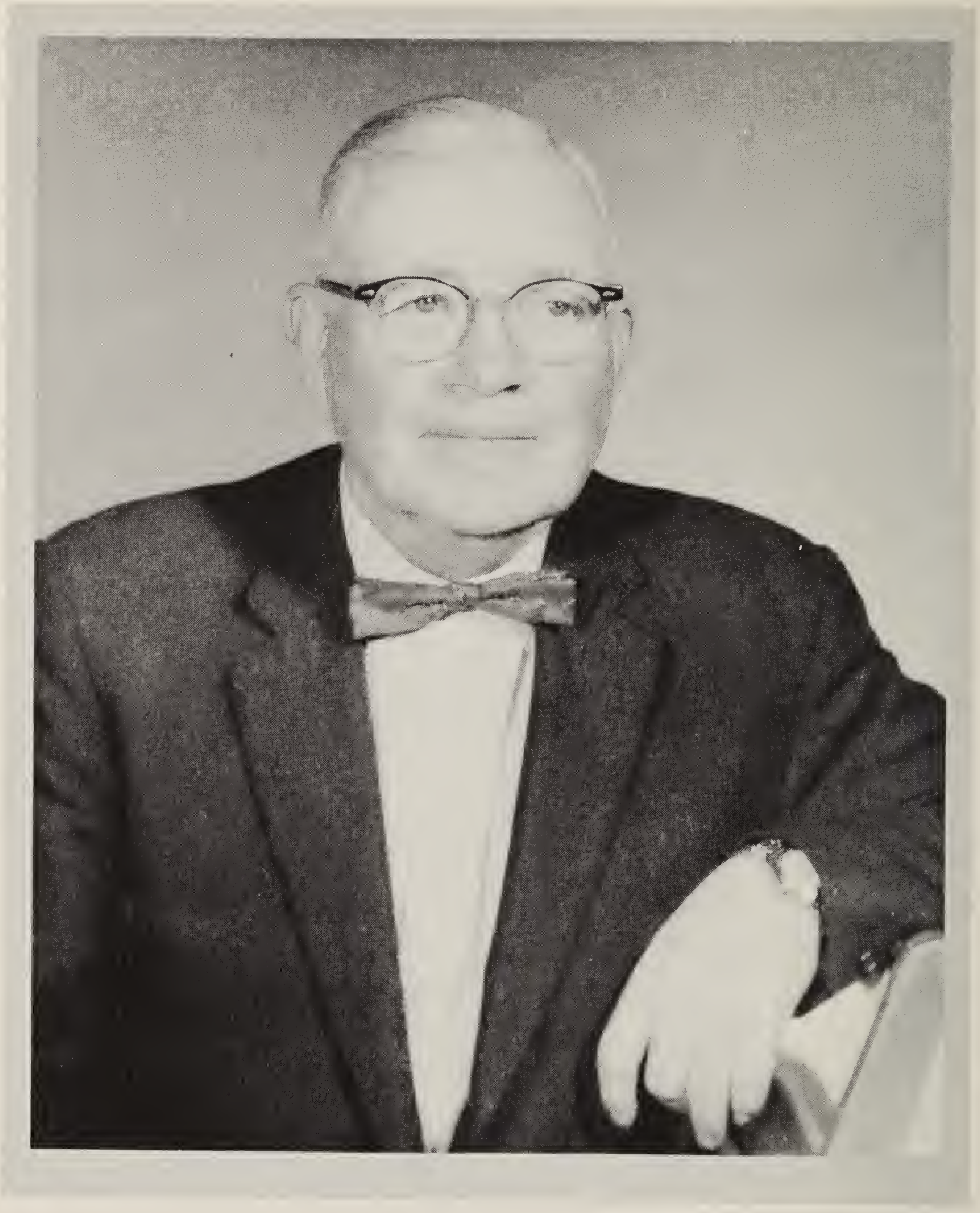
Nellie deserves a great deal of credit for enabling O. D. to concentrate on business. From the first days of their marriage, she never permitted social or other diversions to interfere with O. D.'s business affairs, and that has been true all through their sixty-four years together. No matter how important something might seem, it was invariably subordinated if it got in the way of business plans. There are few wives who would maintain that position as stoutly as she has, even for a much briefer time. Nellie has been a partial invalid for almost twenty years, nevertheless she has continued to manage her home primarily for O. D.'s comfort and convenience. O. D. and Nellie observed their sixty-fourth wedding anniversary December *10*, *1960*.

Believing that his business activities could be better directed from a central location, Dan moved to Seattle in *1923* and established a home at Zenith. Shortly before, in *1921*, at Spokane, Dan Jr. was taken ill with infantile paralysis, and the little boy's death caused the mother much mental suffering, which persisted for years. She took the younger boys to California, but ultimately returned to the Zenith home, after Dan built a home next door to his country place. This unusual arrangement continued for many years, until May died in *1959*.

Dan apparently never aspired to a top post in the Fisher empire, but he determined to be the master of the part for which he was responsible. His position is well illustrated by a conversation which he had in *1895* with his father, when the latter asked him to pinch hit for Will P. in the Boulder store at the time of his sunstroke. Dan was only seventeen at the time.

"Will I be boss?" he asked.

Dan was referred to Will P., who after some hesitation agreed that his young brother would indeed be boss. Dan

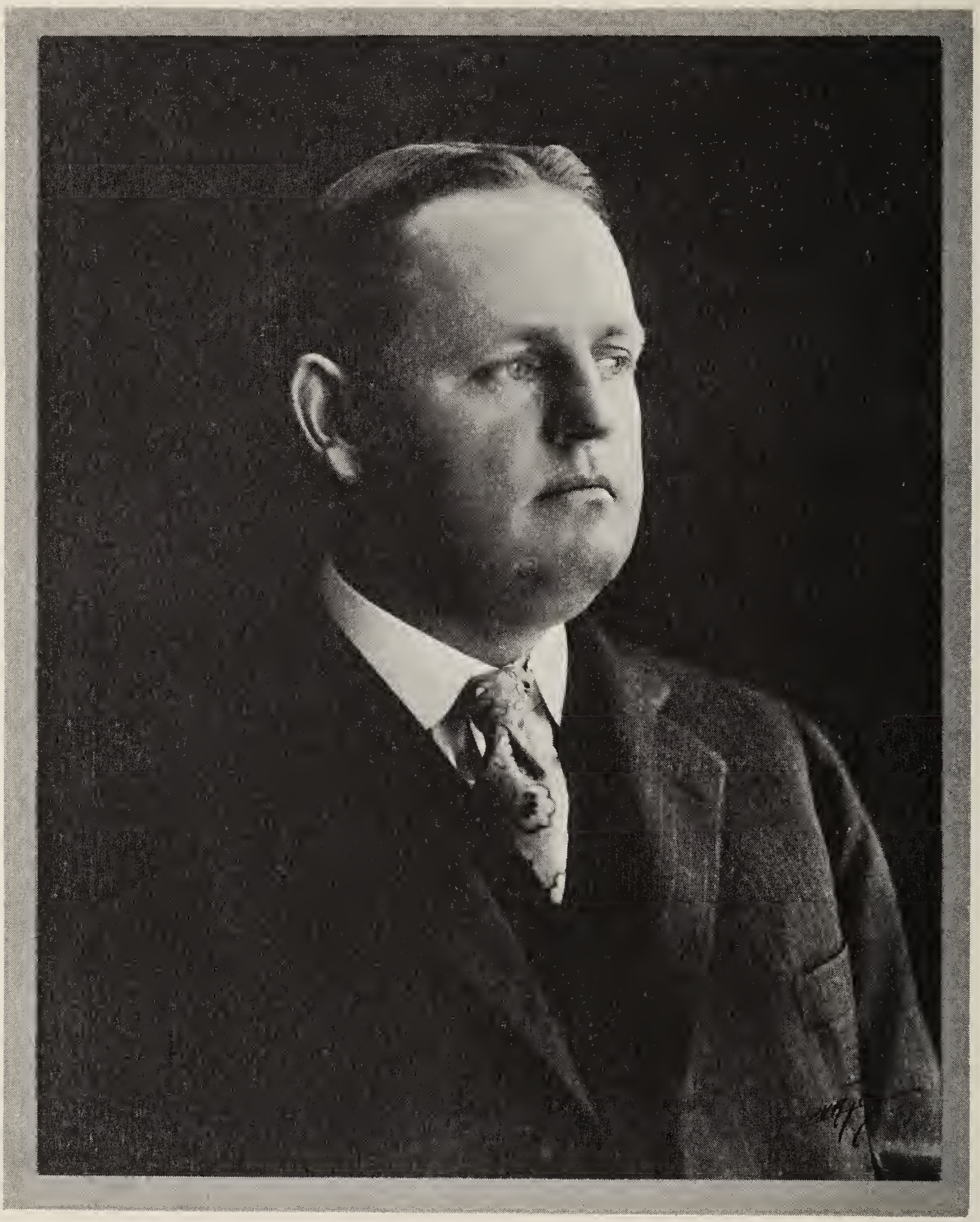


. . . Orin Wallace Fisher . . . born January 8, 1891
. . . in Humansville, Missouri . . .

then ran the store as if it were his own. He followed the same rule in regard to the Gallatin Valley Milling Company and later the grain department of the Seattle mill. He invariably supported the company manager on all issues outside his own area of action, but within his sphere of influence Dan retained absolute power and tolerated interference from nobody. As he gained experience in buying and handling wheat, he became recognized as one of the leaders in the trade in Montana and later in the Pacific Northwest.

Lula had been brought up in the tradition that a woman should have nothing to do with business, and during Willard's lifetime she conformed to the tradition. At his death, her brothers assured her that they regarded it as their duty to look after her affairs. She shocked them by replying that she proposed to attend to that task herself. To their way of thinking, it was close to improper that a woman should be concerned about business when she had male relatives who were experienced and skilled in such matters. She proceeded to prove that Fisher business ability was not the exclusive endowment of males, and in the course of time she won the wholehearted admiration of her brothers for her competence in business and shrewdness in making investments.

Lula Warren came to be one of the best-known women in Seattle. She had little interest in society as such. Her first concern was her sons, and she was intensely devoted to them. She gave her time and her great energies and her money to things in which she believed. At the head of her list was the First Methodist Church, her gifts to that institution being extensive. On one occasion the entire church was recarpeted at her expense. She sponsored various philanthropies, mostly unpublicized. She made a point of welcoming all new brides into the family, of visiting all new babies and keeping track of them as they grew, of staging family reunions and



. . . William Willard Warren . . . born May 11, 1876
. . . Lincoln, Illinois . . .

keeping the family together. In time she became the grand dame of the Fishers, but to her last days she insisted that she was Mrs. W. W. Warren and not Lula Fisher Warren.

After Burr was incapacitated in *1923*, Wallace was brought to Seattle to take his place. By this time, he had eight years of milling experience which ranged from looking after a sales territory to operating a small mill and an oatmill plant. Moreover, he had a great deal of engineering skill and the kind of imagination which expresses itself in the form of inventions. He began to experiment with a variety of ideas, and in the course of time several of them were adopted. After a year or so, Tom Fowler left and Wallace thereupon became mill superintendent. A few years later he was also named assistant manager and then executive vice president.

From the time of Wallace's return from the Navy in *1919*, the five Fisher brothers were associated closely in business. From the standpoint of time required, the principal business activity of each was the milling company. This arrangement pleased O. W., and it would have pleased him even more had he known that all five were located in the same office and working together. The fact that they might disagree at times would not have disturbed him, even when the disagreements were sharp and the arguments heated. He knew that all Fishers of his clan had strong minds and that differences were bound to occur. He also knew that in times of stress and trouble, the disagreements were somehow dissolved and the brothers formed into a solid phalanx. Moreover, no matter how much they might differ at times, the brothers themselves wanted to be together. Each of them had great abilities, and when they were working together they all knew that their power as a team was greater than it was when each was on his own.

In *1913*, O. W. had formed a holding company, to which he transferred the bulk of his property. When he passed away, the title to more than ninety per cent of his holdings was vested in the O. W. Fisher Company. Most of that company's stock had been distributed in equal shares to his six children during his lifetime, and his heirs entered into an agreement under which this stock was held in escrow and was not permitted to be used for collateral or sold or to pass out of the hands of anyone not a blood descendant of the founder. There was thus no division of property when he crossed the bar. O. W. didn't force his sons to continue their business association, but his disposition of property facilitated that end.[2]

Will P. became president of the O. W. Fisher Company at his father's death, and his four brothers were directors. Each of the older sons had also formed a personal holding company of his own, to take title to personally-owned securities; thus there were the Fisher Trading Company (Will P.'s), the Burr Fisher Company, the O. D. Fisher Investment Company and the D. R. Fisher Company. There was also the Warren Investment Company. In most cases, each brother headed his own company and the others were directors, but this changed gradually as their respective children gained maturity and experience. Each of the direct heirs of O. W. had an undivided interest in the O. W. Fisher Company, which consisted in the main of the things which he had accumulated in his lifetime in the various companies which have been named, together with some accretions in the course of time, whereas the holding companies of the second generation held the properties which each of them had acquired as his own. There were a good many duplications in the portfolios, but also some variations. The members of the second Fisher generation had substantial inheritances, but each of them had accumulated sizable amounts as a result of his own efforts.

The first great new Fisher venture on the part of the second generation was entry into the General Insurance Company, which was organized in Seattle in *1923* by a group of business men headed by an insurance man named Hawthorne K. Dent. Fisher Flouring Mills Company subscribed to a modest amount of stock, but O. D. turned down a repeated opportunity to become a director on the ground that he had no time to serve. However, when the company was incorporated, he found that he was not only a director but within a few weeks he was chosen as chairman of the board.[3] When the company offices were opened, O. D. made it a practice for the first year or two to spend a couple of hours or so in its offices each morning en route to his mill office. He made the same sort of study of insurance and of General's operations that he had been making of flour milling, banking, lumbering, and real estate, and in the course of a few years he acquired a great knowledge of that business also. Along the line, he and other Fishers increased their General holdings by substantial amounts, and like most insurance stocks, General's stock zoomed in value. The result is that for some years past, the value of Fisher-owned General stock has exceeded the family's holdings of any other enterprise. O. D. continued as chairman of the board until *1952*, and returned to the post from *1957* to the present. *(1961)*

It was only three years after General Insurance Company was organized that the next Fisher venture into a new sphere was launched. This move was likewise without premeditation. One day in *1926*, Will P. introduced a man named Birt Fisher[4] to O. D. with the remark, "This fellow wants us to finance a radio station." At the time, O. D. was a radio fan who sat up to the wee small hours trying to tune in radio stations all over the world;[5] if he had not been, this event might not have happened. O. D. was convinced that radio would become an important means of mass communications; Will P. believed that it would have merchandizing possibilities and therefore would be helpful in flour sales; and Wallace had some knowledge of radio engineering. Thus was founded Fisher's Blend Station, named for the principal flour brand of the milling company. It has the call letters KOMO, and was owned jointly by Fisher Flouring Mills Company and Birt Fisher, who was made station manager. Wallace became president of the station. It was in the black from the start.

The great depression which began in *1929* left the Fishers without any lasting scars, although for some years the market value of their securities was greatly reduced. The depression had varying effects upon their enterprises. Probably the hardest hit were the lumber companies, for building construction was at a virtual standstill for three or four years; Four L was less hard hit than many others, and Weyerhaeuser's tremendous resources enabled that company to weather the storm handily. General Insurance was comparatively unaffected, although the price of its stock declined greatly. Real estate was a drug on the market, but Fisher-White-Henry had solid tenants and therefore was not hurt for the long pull; Metropolitan suffered from rent reductions for a time. The radio station was on the upgrade despite poor business generally. The flour mill's domestic business remained about constant, but its exports declined sharply.

Just before the depression began, the First National Bank entered into a three-way consolidation with two other large banks, the new bank being headed by Morris Arnold. After the depression became serious, there were many anxious days and nights for the bank's officers and directors, and through this period (as he had been for years before) O. D. was

Arnold's closest confidant. He was a tower of strength to the harrassed banker, and although the bank suffered great losses in deposits it came through the trial in excellent shape.

Although the nation did not recover from all of the depression's effects until close to the outbreak of the second world war, business began picking up slowly in the mid-thirties and in some lines began to flourish again. The lumber and banking businesses required more time to return to a semblance of normal conditions than did the others in which the Fishers were interested, but ultimately all of them became prosperous. The family suffered no permanent losses during the hard years, a fact which can properly be attributed to the policy of investing only in basically sound enterprises that had prudent and competent management.

After the middle *1930*'s, Will P.'s health began to decline and he was finally unable to work. After a long illness, he died on May *11, 1938*. His responsibilities in the salesmanagership of the milling company had gradually been taken over by his assistant, J. S. Davis, and he was succeeded in the presidency of the O. W. Fisher Company by his brother O. D.

Nine Fishers wore the uniform of their country in the second world war, and they were joined by eight in-laws. Those of highest rank were Commander Wallace Fisher and Colonel Donald G. Graham, Sr., both of them retreads. In addition to Wallace the Fishers in service were Peter, David, Jr., George, Glen, Bill and John Warren and the two Graham sons. Most of them became officers. The only one to see combat service was Glen, who piloted a dive bomber in the Japanese theater of war. He was on a dangerous mission on V-J day only five minutes from target when the flight was recalled because the enemy had capitulated.

Only two new business ventures of major consequence have been added in recent years. The first was the establishment of a marina on Lake Union by the Fisher-White-Henry Company; it was begun before the war and has been enlarged considerably since. The impetus for this move was the large number of private boats in Seattle and the limited facilities for covered moorings and servicing them. Although extensive competition has developed, the marina has proved to be a good move. However, a secondary step, the establishment of a store at the marina, was finally liquidated in *1955* after an unsuccessful record.

The other new venture was into televison.[6] After a four-year wait, KOMO succeeded in obtaining a channel in *1953*, and within a brief time the television station captured a large share of the Seattle audience and became recognized as one of the prestige stations in the nation. Radio earnings were of course depleted by the impact of television, but the latter has more than made up the difference. KOMO-TV is a wholly owned subsidiary of Fisher's Blend Station, Inc. More recently, an application for a channel in Portland by Fisher Broadcasting Company has been approved; this station is to be owned jointly by Fisher's Blend Station, Inc., and a group of Portland business men.

During the postwar years, the enterprises in which the Fishers are interested have shared in the general upward business trend which has been due in part to inflationary processes and in part to business growth making up for time lost in the war and the depression. Probably the most phenomenal expansion has been in insurance, lumber and television. Flour milling has shared only moderately in the gains, due to circumstances which are peculiar to that industry in the Pacific Northwest region.

Lula Warren was the third member of the second Fisher generation to go to the world beyond, passing away in her sleep on August *2, 1956*. She was followed a year and a half later by Estelle, the widow of Will P., who died on January *29, 1958*, only a few days before her eighty-fifth birthday. For many years they shared a pew in the First Methodist Church where they attended services with great regularity.

There remain three members of the family of O. W. and Euphemia. They are O. D., long the family patriarch, who passed his eighty-fifth milestone on November *29, 1960;* Dan, whose eighty-third birthday is to take place in July *1961;* and Wallace, who was seventy early in January *1961*.

From the time of the Fisher entry into radio almost thirty-five years ago, Wallace has been the president of the subsidiary which owned the station. He planned and built the first radio transmitter, and in due course he became a recognized radio-engineer – a field which experienced revolutionary changes with startling frequency. Until *1940*, he divided his time between radio and the flour milling company; in the latter he was executive vice president for a decade before he re-entered the armed forces. When he returned from the Navy, he devoted his entire time to radio. He suffered a nervous breakdown and stroke in *1952*, and since that time he has largely been retired from business although continuing as president of Fisher's Blend Station, Inc.

During the *1930*'s and *1940*'s, Wallace took an active part in various civic undertakings – he was chairman of the Washington Taxpayers' Council, trustee of the Associated Industries of Washington, director of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, trustee of Seattle, Inc., director of the Better Business Bureau, and president of the Washington Athletic Club and of the Broadmoor Golf Club.

Dan has long been established as the dean of the wheat trade in Montana and the Pacific Northwest. In this business there now are grandsons of men who were his contemporaries in the early Gallatin Valley days. With his sons closely associated with him, he manages Gallatin Valley, White-Dulany[7] and the grain department of the flour mill just as he has for considerably more than a normal generation. It is now fifty-seven years since Dan began with the Montana mill, and more than another decade is required to find the beginning of his business life when he took over the Boulder store in an emergency. More than sixty-five years since he entered the business world and still going, Dan qualifies as an iron man indeed!

O. D. has reduced his business activities to the point where he is now a member of only nineteen boards of directors, whereas at the peak of his career he served on twenty-seven! Here is a man of eighty-five who reads and digests detailed reports from corporation managers just as he did thirty and forty and fifty years ago, who keeps up with all events of consequence in a long list of companies and in varied and complicated industries, who inspects properties and helps shape policies and who amazingly plans for the future. He was asked not long ago about two timber tracts, and his reply was, "Yes, we expect to begin cutting the first tract in *1972*, but the other won't be ready for several years after that!"

O. D. has concentrated upon business almost to the exclusion of other activities. He has held a variety of offices in industrial and local organizations, but in periods other than national emergencies he has preferred to reserve his time for management of businesses in which he has a financial interest. Here his favorite role is that of self-appointed critic. He often says, "Somebody has to pin-point the wrong things that are being done. The right ones will take care of themselves."

Inexhaustible and almost indestructible, O. D. Fisher can look back upon a business career which has covered sixty-eight years – more than that, if the enterprises of his industrious boyhood are included. He has exceeded the allotted Biblical span by a decade and a half, normal retirement by twenty years. It is beyond debate that midway in his ninth decade he carries a heavier business load than do most executives who are twenty years his junior.

O. W. Fisher created a business empire – his sons have established a business dynasty.

XI

Third and Fourth Generations

Sixteen grandchildren of O. W. and Euphemia Fisher lived to adult years. The oldest grandchild was born in *1892* and the youngest in *1922*. The forty great-grandchildren came on the scene during a slightly greater span of time, the first arriving in *1920* and the last in *1955*. Present count of the fifth generation stands at twenty-nine, all of whom have been born since *1944*.

The third generation of Fishers was brought up under considerably better economic circumstances than their elders, and had far more extensive educational opportunities. Nearly all of them have benefitted from these advantages, and in turn the communities in which they have lived have benefitted from a constantly broadening participation in public affairs of all sorts.

Almost all of O. W.'s grandsons became gainfully employed soon after they completed their college courses. The great-grandsons who have reached adult years have done likewise. Only a very small number of this entire group has deserted the business world even temporarily. It is interesting to observe that the tradition of working has carried through four generations, although most of the individuals have command or potential command of incomes sufficient to enable them to live comfortably, if not luxuriously, without doing anything. Although the subject has not been researched, one nevertheless suspects that the proportion of Fisher men who are at work daily is higher than is the case in most families which belong to the same general economic category. There seems to be something about being a Fisher which impels those who bear that name or are associated with it to apply themselves industriously.

It would be absurd to pretend that the heirs of O. W. Fisher, even to the fourth generation, have not been aided greatly by their inheritances. Of course they have. Anyone who is in command of property is by that fact alone afforded opportunities which do not, as a rule, become available to others. Such a person finds many doors that open easily for him, but he also finds the business world to be a pretty exacting place and that in a vast majority of cases a man does not long hold a responsible position solely because he bears a certain name or belongs to a certain clan.

Roughly half the Fisher men of the third and fourth generations hold positions in what may broadly be called the Fisher business enterprises. Several of them have attained posts of great responsibility and authority, and have established reputations for ability and leadership. It is possible that they might have done almost or equally as well had they elected to participate in some business in which there is no Fisher interest. In fact, they might actually have done better for themselves in that case. It may only be a coincidence, but the proportion of Fishers and Fisher husbands who have done well is about as high among those who have cast their lot elsewhere as it is among those who are associated with Fisher enterprises. This suggests that those who remained with the family concerns were not unduly favored by that fact.

It is a curious thing that among the descendants of O. W. Fisher only one man is following a professional career. The others are all engaged in business pursuits. This indicates the strong influence of the business tradition in this family.

David Meeker Fisher was the first member of the third generation, the first son of the Will P. Fishers and the first grandchild of the O. W. Fishers. He was born at Birch Tree on September 22, 1892, and his boyhood days were spent at Boulder and Missoula. He was a forestry graduate of the University of Washington, where he was a member of the junior varsity crew. He went immediately to Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company, where he laid out and built the original logging roads. He was at Snoqualmie Falls for twenty-nine years in all, being in turn chainman, woods crewman, logging superintendent, sawmill superintendent, sales manager and assistant manager of the company. In 1945, he became manager of Willapa Harbor Lumber Company, a division of Weyerhaeuser, and was located at Raymond. He also managed the Gray's Harbor division at Aberdeen. The former was a losing operation when he became manager, and he turned it into a money-maker. His entire business life was spent in the lumber industry of western Washington.

David was a six-footer, and he became bald even as a young man. The day he retired in 1957, he did a characteristic thing – he went through the office and plant and shook hands with every person who had been working for him.

David's wife was Dorothy Jones of San Francisco, daughter of the Presidio commandant; they were married on July *19, 1919*. They lived thirty-eight years in lumber towns, and Dorothy was a leader in every community activity. Their daughter Sarah (Sally) was a Phi Beta Kappa and a magna cum laude graduate of the University of Washington. She married Donald Sellars, who became a branch manager for the Seattle-First National Bank. They have seven children. David M., Jr. was on the dean's list at Yale, and after he completed his military service he followed his father's profession of lumberman. He is now manager of the Southern and Hermitage divisions of Potlatch Forest Industries, at Warren, Arkansas, and is a director of Louisiana Long Leaf Lumber Company. His wife was Irene Brudie of Seattle; they have three children.

The year after David's retirement, he and Dorothy set out on a world tour. Only a few days out of Seattle, he became seriously ill and was taken off the ship at Acapulco, Mexico. He died in that city on August *23, 1958*. Almost two years later, Dorothy married Roderic Olzendam.

Ben Herr Fisher was the second son of Will P. and Estelle. He was born at Boulder on January *21, 1895*. After two years at the University of Washington he went to Belgrade where he worked in the mill laboratory and was a part time salesman. Following a year as a flour salesman in Portland, he went to Great Falls, where he operated the wheat laboratory of Gallatin Valley Milling Company, and he became an assistant to Joe Cloidt, who was Dan Fisher's deputy. In *1924* he bought the elevator at Choteau, Montana, and subsequently added a coal yard and oil distributorship. He also built the first tourist cabins in Montana. When Ben sold the

Choteau business in *1932*, the drouth and depression had been so bitter that nearly every rancher for miles around was heavily indebted to him.[1] At the very bottom of the depression, he launched a Chevrolet agency in Missoula and after a hard struggle he became well established and prospered in the business.

Ben was short and stout, and had quite a record as an athlete. He was an unusually good salesman, and his automobile agency became one of the largest in Montana.

Ben was married on December *20, 1920*, to Florence d'Evers of an old Chicago family who were then new residents of Seattle. Like her sister-in-law Dorothy, Florence was reared in comfort in a large city, but was fated to live for years in a small village, but neither was known to have complained about that experience.

Ben and Florence had two children. Glen was a dive bomber pilot.[2] Following the war he became interested in flour production and after graduating from Kansas State University[3] he went into the operating department of Fisher Flouring Mills Company and rose to the post of assistant milling superintendent. Over the year-end of *1960-61*, he had the assignment for several months of supervising the initial production of Fisher brands of flour by Republic Flour Mills, Inc., in the Philippines, for sale to the trade in that nation. Soon thereafter he accepted a temporary position of production manager of Republic. Glen's wife was Muriel Miller of Billings. They have four daughters.

Marion, daughter of Ben and Florence, was married to Jay Overman after attending the University of Montana for two years, and they operated a Montana dude ranch. She once travelled to New York on a cattle train and appeared in the rodeo in Madison Square Garden. Marion now lives in Great Falls. She has two boys.

Ben passed away on October 10, 1940, suffering a heart attack while on a visit to Seattle. Florence continued to live in Missoula until 1951, but has made her home in Seattle the past ten years.

Julia Euphemia was the only girl in the Will P. Fisher household. She was born in Boulder on February 3, 1897. At the University of Washington, she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and was graduated cum laude. She went to China as an English teacher at Canton Christian College, and she also was dean of women there. In China, Julia met Maxwell M. Hamilton, a native of Oklahoma who was in the diplomatic service, and they were married in Hong Kong on December 20, 1924. The Hamiltons remained in China until 1927, their daughter Julia Frances being born in Shanghai. From 1927 to 1943, they lived in Washington, D. C., where Max rose through the hierarchy of the State Department to be head of its far eastern division for a number of years. He had a distinguished career. He was in Russia more than a year during the war, part of the time serving as acting ambassador and then was minister to Finland for three years. Subsequently he was a member of the Far Eastern Commission, with the rank of ambassador, for four years. He was a member of the team which wrote the Japanese peace treaty.

The past three years, following Max' death in 1957 at Palo Alto, California, where they had lived after his retirement two years before, Julia has devoted her great energies chiefly to the Moral Re-Armament movement, which has headquarters at Mackinac Island, Michigan. She travels a great deal and speaks on behalf of the movement, in which she has been deeply interested for many years.

Julia Frances gave up the limelight of being the daughter of the American minister to Finland to become an animal husbandry student at Oregon State College. She now lives at

Roseburg, Oregon, where her husband Charles Church, owns a pharmacy. They have four children.

Kenneth Robinson Fisher, third son of Will P. and Estelle, was the first grandchild of the O. W. Fishers to be born in Seattle. His natal day was December 12, 1906. He was graduated by the University of Washington, and has a master's degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Business.

Ken's business career has been devoted wholly to Fisher Flouring Mills Company. He did clerical work for a time, and then took a sales territory. For more than four years, he worked out of Portland, returning to Seattle in 1937 as advertising manager. When grocery items were separated from bakery and feed sales, he took charge of sales of grocery products. Ken was largely responsible for launching *Zoom*, a flaked whole wheat cereal, which has become the leader of the Fisher grocery product line. He was elected company treasurer in 1946, assistant manager in 1952 and vice president and general manager in 1960. He is a director of the milling company and an officer and director of several other enterprises in which the family is interested. He is also board chairman of General Security Life Insurance Company, which he helped organize, and a director of the Northwestern Glass Company.

The list of civic endeavors in which Ken is involved is quite extensive. He is a trustee of Plymouth Congregational Church, member of the Republican finance committee for King County, was head of the committee which successfully opposed Initiative 205 in the 1960 referendum, longtime member of the board of directors of the Seattle Community Chest, and president of the Pacific Northwest Crop Improvement Association.

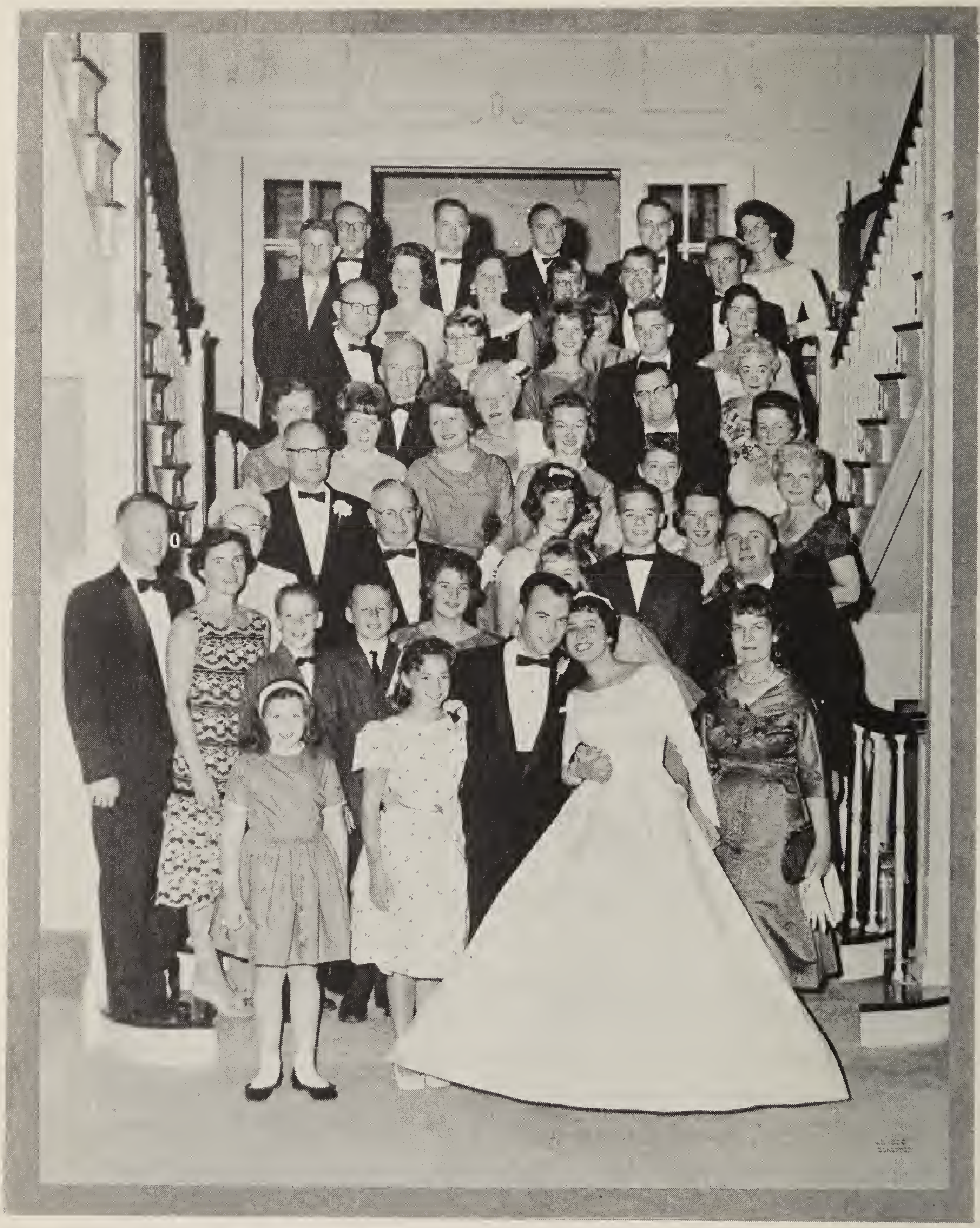
Ken was married on October 29, 1930, to Margaret (Missy) Lewis of Seattle. One of her Phelps ancestors was a colleague of Abraham Lincoln in the Illinois legislature, and when Lincoln broke a quorum by jumping out the window after the door was locked Phelps followed him. Ken and Missy lived in Portland and then in Zenith, and their present home in Broadmoor has been on the architectural tour of the Seattle Art Museum. Their son, Phelps, who is in the KOMO sales department, was married in *1960* to Christel Laes of Germany. He is a graduate of the University of Washington. Daughter Ann is completing high school.

Peter Fisher, named for the great-grandfather who died *70* years before his birth, and the youngest son of Will P. and Estelle, was born in Seattle on January *23, 1920.* Like so many other Fishers, he was graduated from the University of Washington.

At the end of his military service, Peter joined the Fisher Flouring Mills Company and was assigned to the country grain business of an affiliated company. After short stays in Palouse and Spokane, he was located at Ellensburg for six years, buying grain and merchandizing feed. During the Ellensburg period, he was chosen as Young Man of the Year by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. He was also elected to the city council in Ellensburg.

In *1955,* Peter was made assistant to J. S. Davis, director of flour sales for Fisher Flouring Mills Company. He has been supervising a sales territory which extends from Alaska to San Diego.

Peter was married to Shirley Rhoads of Bay City, Michigan, on December *20, 1941.* Shirley had a noted career in dramatics at the University of Washington, and although her fans believed she was destined to be a success in the theater, she turned away from a professional career to marry Peter. They have five children, all of school age – Michael, Cristina, Deborah, Bruce, and Julie.

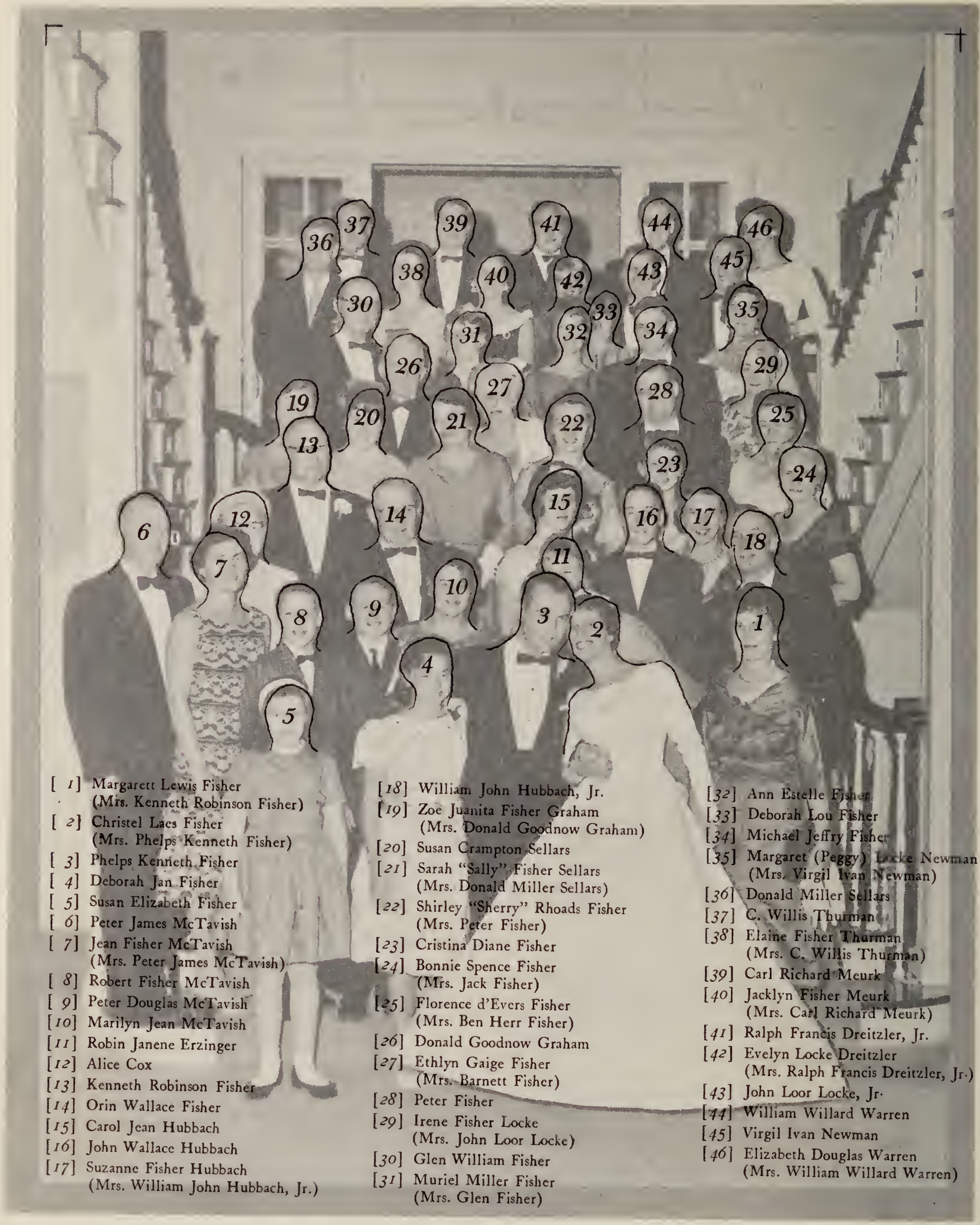


. . . relatives gathered at Phelps Kenneth Fisher-Christel Laes wedding . . .

Barnett Fisher, elder son of Burr and Jennie, was born in Missoula on November *7, 1896.* Most of his boyhood years were in Bozeman, the remainder in San Francisco. He attended New York University for a year. He joined Fisher Flouring Mills Company in *1919* and his work there was chiefly in the operating and planning departments. In the early *1930*'s, he had a nervous breakdown. Thereafter he operated the University Stamp and Coin Shop from *1935* to *1953*, but since the latter date he has been able to work only intermittently, his principal activity having to do with making hand-tooled leather goods.

Barnett was married on November *8, 1919,* to Ethlyn Gaige-Nordine of San Francisco. They have two daughters, Jacklyn and Elaine, both of whom are graduates of the University of Washington. Both hold fifth-year teaching certificates – Jacklyn in art from Columbia and Elaine in speech therapy from Northwestern, fields in which they have definite talents. Jacklyn is Mrs. Carl R. Meurck, and is the mother of two sons and a daughter. Carl is an electrical and naval architect and is assistant manager in Seattle of Todd Shipbuilding Corp. Elaine is married to C. Willis Thurman, sociologist with the Washington Department of Probation and Parole. Elaine has two sons by her earlier marriage to Don B. Ashworth, partner in the insurance agency of McTavish and Ashworth.

Ethlyn has had a notable business career. It began with the University Specialty Shop, operated in conjunction with Barnett's stamp and coin shop for a number of years. She entered the real estate field in *1930*, rehabilitating rundown properties and then trading in real estate and stocks, running a small amount of borrowed money and a modest inheritance into a tidy fortune. She became one of the shrewdest judges in Seattle of real estate potentials, although she insists that



[1] Margarett Lewis Fisher (Mrs. Kenneth Robinson Fisher)
[2] Christel Laes Fisher (Mrs. Phelps Kenneth Fisher)
[3] Phelps Kenneth Fisher
[4] Deborah Jan Fisher
[5] Susan Elizabeth Fisher
[6] Peter James McTavish
[7] Jean Fisher McTavish (Mrs. Peter James McTavish)
[8] Robert Fisher McTavish
[9] Peter Douglas McTavish
[10] Marilyn Jean McTavish
[11] Robin Janene Erzinger
[12] Alice Cox
[13] Kenneth Robinson Fisher
[14] Orin Wallace Fisher
[15] Carol Jean Hubbach
[16] John Wallace Hubbach
[17] Suzanne Fisher Hubbach (Mrs. William John Hubbach, Jr.)
[18] William John Hubbach, Jr.
[19] Zoe Juanita Fisher Graham (Mrs. Donald Goodnow Graham)
[20] Susan Crampton Sellars
[21] Sarah "Sally" Fisher Sellars (Mrs. Donald Miller Sellars)
[22] Shirley "Sherry" Rhoads Fisher (Mrs. Peter Fisher)
[23] Cristina Diane Fisher
[24] Bonnie Spence Fisher (Mrs. Jack Fisher)
[25] Florence d'Evers Fisher (Mrs. Ben Herr Fisher)
[26] Donald Goodnow Graham
[27] Ethlyn Gaige Fisher (Mrs. Barnett Fisher)
[28] Peter Fisher
[29] Irene Fisher Locke (Mrs. John Loor Locke)
[30] Glen William Fisher
[31] Muriel Miller Fisher (Mrs. Glen Fisher)
[32] Ann Estelle Fisher
[33] Deborah Lou Fisher
[34] Michael Jeffry Fisher
[35] Margaret (Peggy) Locke Newman (Mrs. Virgil Ivan Newman)
[36] Donald Miller Sellars
[37] C. Willis Thurman
[38] Elaine Fisher Thurman (Mrs. C. Willis Thurman)
[39] Carl Richard Meurk
[40] Jacklyn Fisher Meurk (Mrs. Carl Richard Meurk)
[41] Ralph Francis Dreitzler, Jr.
[42] Evelyn Locke Dreitzler (Mrs. Ralph Francis Dreitzler, Jr.)
[43] John Loor Locke, Jr.
[44] William Willard Warren
[45] Virgil Ivan Newman
[46] Elizabeth Douglas Warren (Mrs. William Willard Warren)

. . . relatives gathered at Phelps Kenneth Fisher-Christel Laes wedding . . .

Barnett Fisher, elder son of Burr and Jennie, was born in Missoula on November 7, 1896. Most of his boyhood years were in Bozeman, the remainder in San Francisco. He attended New York University for a year. He joined Fisher Flouring Mills Company in 1919 and his work there was chiefly in the operating and planning departments. In the early 1930's, he had a nervous breakdown. Thereafter he operated the University Stamp and Coin Shop from 1935 to 1953, but since the latter date he has been able to work only intermittently, his principal activity having to do with making hand-tooled leather goods.

Barnett was married on November 8, 1919, to Ethlyn Gaige-Nordine of San Francisco. They have two daughters, Jacklyn and Elaine, both of whom are graduates of the University of Washington. Both hold fifth-year teaching certificates – Jacklyn in art from Columbia and Elaine in speech therapy from Northwestern, fields in which they have definite talents. Jacklyn is Mrs. Carl R. Meurck, and is the mother of two sons and a daughter. Carl is an electrical and naval architect and is assistant manager in Seattle of Todd Shipbuilding Corp. Elaine is married to C. Willis Thurman, sociologist with the Washington Department of Probation and Parole. Elaine has two sons by her earlier marriage to Don B. Ashworth, partner in the insurance agency of McTavish and Ashworth.

Ethlyn has had a notable business career. It began with the University Specialty Shop, operated in conjunction with Barnett's stamp and coin shop for a number of years. She entered the real estate field in 1939, rehabilitating rundown properties and then trading in real estate and stocks, running a small amount of borrowed money and a modest inheritance into a tidy fortune. She became one of the shrewdest judges in Seattle of real estate potentials, although she insists that she relies heavily upon Barnett's judgment before she makes any deal.

Jack Fisher was the younger son of the Burr Fishers. He was born in Bozeman on February 11, 1905, and lived in that town and in San Francisco before Burr brought the family to Seattle at the end of the war. Jack attended the university only briefly, and he worked at the mill for several short periods in the sales and operating departments. He married Bonnie Spence, a Canadian born girl, on August 25, 1930. They had two daughters, Jenee and Deborah. Jenee, an artist, was graduated by the University of Oregon and holds a master's degree from the University of Washington. She married Mario Rabinowitz, a native of Mexico, and they have a baby son. Deborah has bachelor's and master's degrees from Washington, and had her own television program for more than a year.

Jack died on April 27, 1945, after a long illness which culminated in tuberculosis.

Juanita Fisher, the elder daughter of O. D. and Nellie, was born at Birch Tree on September 15, 1897. She was the first graduate of St. Nicholas, the first private school in Seattle for girls. After being graduated from Smith College, Juanita was married on September 2, 1919, to Donald G. Graham, an Iowan who had been a test pilot in France. The young Grahams lived in Boston while Don completed his Harvard law course. In 1921 they moved to Seattle and he became assistant United States district attorney, after which he entered private practice and began the long climb which culminated in his becoming senior partner in one of the great law firms of the state.

The Grahams are leaders in social and civic affairs in Seattle. Juanita has served on a number of charitable boards. At their home in Broadmoor they have one of the most beautiful gardens in the city. Don has made gardening a hobby and has served as judge at many flower shows. Special interests are rhododendrons and camellias. There are three hundred-fifty imported varieties of the former and more than two hundred varieties of the latter in the Graham gardens. In *1943*, one of the outstanding rhododendron hybrids produced by a nurseryman near the city was named the "Mrs. Donald Graham" in recognition of the couple's deep interest in floriculture. Don also played a prominent part in forming the Arboretum Foundation of the University of Washington and served a term as its president.

During the second world war, Don rejoined the air force and trained a wing and took it to England. He was later on the staff of Generals LeMay and Partridge.

Richard Fisher Graham, the older son of Don and Juanita, was born on May *26*, *1920*, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was the first grandchild of the O. D. Fishers and the first great-grandchild of the O. W. Fishers. He is a chemical engineer by profession, is an engineering graduate of the University of Washington, and is now associated with Hooker Chemical Corporation, Los Angeles. Dick's wife was Frances Parks of Huntsville, Alabama. Their daughter was the first girl baby in the Graham family in four generations.

The younger son, Donald G., Jr., a graduate of Dartmouth, and of the University of Washington law school, is the first Fisher to choose a professional career. He is a member of his father's law firm. Don, Jr. married Felecia Anhalt of Seattle, and they have two little boys.

Irene Vivian Fisher is the younger daughter of O. D. and Nellie. She was also born at Birch Tree, on April *5*, *1901*. She attended St. Nicholas in Seattle and the Guild and Evans Finishing School in Boston. Irene was married on September *21*, *1920* to John L. Locke of Seattle. He had joined the mill staff more than two years earlier, and after his apprenticeship he was successively salesman, purchasing agent, feed department manager, secretary, and manager, and in *1948* he was elected president and general manager of Fisher Flouring Mills Company. John is regarded in the industry as one of the outstanding mill executives in the United States, and is a past president of the Pacific Millers' Association and a past president of both the Flour Millers' Export Association and the Millers' National Federation. He has been a director of General Insurance Company since *1940* and is an officer and director of other companies, as well as of civic and social organizations. He has been a director of the Seattle and the United States Chambers of Commerce, and was awarded a Certificate of Merit by Washington State College for "distinguished service in industrial development."

John and Irene have three children. Peggy (Margaret Ann) is Mrs. Virgil I. Newman; she has a daughter, Robin Erzinger, by a former marriage. Virgil is owner of the Newman Lumber Company, Orofino, Idaho. John L. Jocke, Jr. is administrative assistant to the general manager of KOMO, and he often doubles as a television camera man. Evelyn Thorne, younger daughter of the Lockes, is Mrs. Ralph F. Dreitzler, Jr.; the couple has been jointly engaged in the operation of a Seattle insurance agency, and they also have mining and investment interests. They have a son and a daughter.

Irene has been active in a wide variety of civic and community undertakings. Perhaps the most notable are leadership in raising funds for the medical school of the University of Washington and leadership in war loan drives. In the latter area, she was state chairman of the women's savings bond division as well as King County women's chairman for ten years. In eight drives, her group was responsible for the sale of about two hundred twenty million dollars of war bonds.

Bennett Irvine Fisher, eldest living son of Dan and May, was born in Bozeman on June *19, 1913*, and as a boy lived there and in Great Falls, Spokane and Seattle. While still a youngster, he became an announcer for KOMO, and held that position intermittently over a period of about twenty years. For a time, he was in charge of the announcers. In some of the intervals, Bennett studied music and took voice lessons in the East and in Europe.

The past five years, Bennett has been superintendent of the country elevator line of Gallatin Valley Milling Company, his headquarters being in Great Falls. His wife is the former Gisele Cowan, a French-speaking girl whose homeland was the island of Tahiti. He also has a son, Bennett II, by a former marriage. This boy, a junior at the University of Washington, lives with grandfather Dan a large part of the time.

George Oliver Fisher, the younger son of the Dan Fishers, was born May *5, 1918* in Great Falls. He was graduated from the University of Washington, married and entered military service almost simultaneously.

George's business career has closely followed the pattern set by his father. When he returned from the Army, he lived in Bozeman and worked in the Belgrade mill and then was mill manager until the plant closed in *1953*. He was also associated with the operation of Gallatin Valley Milling Company's country elevators, and later he became vice president of the company in charge of the elevator line. There are thirty-one elevators presently in the chain. He has been located in Great Falls the past eight years.

George was married on December *24, 1941*, to Allie Gayle Parmenter of Vancouver, Washington, a native of Kansas. They have two sons.

George Fisher Warren, eldest son of the Willard Warren household, was born at the lumber town of Fisher, Louisiana, on April *11, 1906*. After graduation from the University of Washington, George worked for a year in the mill at Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company, where his late father had been the first general manager. In *1930*, he began an eleven year connection with Fisher Flouring Mills Company, at first in the accounting department and then for a long time as assistant purchasing agent. In *1941*, he became manager of Marina Mart, Inc., which operated a store at the Lake Union marina, built at that time by Fisher-White-Henry Company.

On January *3, 1931* George was married to Elizabeth Dent of Seattle, member of a family prominent in lumbering and Columbia River navigation. Her brother, blind since boyhood, became an attorney of considerable standing, and Elizabeth is given credit for a large share of his success. George and Elizabeth have a daughter, Elizabeth Louella, a Stanford graduate. She is now Mrs. Vernon R. Anderson of Palo Alto, California. Vernon is general manager of the Vidar Electronics Corporation, Mountain View, California. They have a son and a daughter. George F., Jr. is a great-grandson of O. W. Fisher. He was a navy officer and was recently accepted for admission to Stanford University Graduate School of Business. He is the tallest of all the Fishers, standing six feet four and a half.

George, Sr. suffered a stroke in *1956*, not long after the death of his mother, and has been retired from business since that time.

William Willard Warren, Jr., usually called Bill to distinguish him from his father, was born on August *22, 1911*, also at Fisher, Louisiana. There is a family tradition that his father, his grandfather Fisher and the doctor spent the night playing pinochle while his arrival was awaited. He came to Seattle as a small boy.

Bill Warren worked half days at the flour mill throughout two college years. Soon after he was graduated by the University of Washington, he went to work at KOMO. He held a variety of neophyte jobs there, but in less than a year he became radio program director without any previous experience in that sphere. He continued in the post for about eighteen years, less time out for military service. In 1952, Bill became general manager, also taking on the same responsibility for the television station when that service was inaugurated the following year. Later he was elected executive vice president and general manager of Fisher's Blend Station, Inc., and a member of the board of directors. He is executive vice president and a director in Fisher Broadcasting Company, which was organized to operate a television station in Portland. He is undoubtedly entitled to a great deal of the credit for the success attained by KOMO, both in radio and in television, and he has attained national stature in the broadcasting industry. He is also a board member of Fisher Flouring Mills Company.

Bill was married to Mary Elizabeth Douglas, direct descendant of the celebrated Black Douglas, on April 19, 1947, in Bellingham. They have three children – Douglas, Keith, and Mary. He also has a son by an earlier marriage – William Willard, III, who lives with his father. This young man is now doing graduate work in physics at Washington University, St. Louis, after an under-graduate career at Stanford.

John Oliver is the youngest of the Warren trio. He was born in Seattle on April 25, 1916. He stands six feet three, and is not only the tallest grandson of O. W. Fisher but is the only grandson who exceeded the towering height of the old patriarch. He was graduated by the University of Washington and worked for General Insurance Company and Marina Mart, Inc., each for several years. It was said of John that he knew literally everyone in Seattle.

In 1955, John moved to Honolulu, where he established a chain of six florist shops in the principal hotels, the company being known as Hawaii Blossoms, Ltd. It is not only the largest florist business in Hawaii, but is noted for the large volume of flowers shipped by air to the mainland.

John was married on November 20, 1942, to Jeanette Jahn of Seattle. They have four children – Wendy, John, Jr., Robert and Judith.

Suzanne is the elder of the two daughters of Wallace and Vivien Fisher. She was born in Seattle on April 19, 1920, and is a graduate of the University of Washington. She was married on February 26, 1943, to William J. Hubbach, Jr., a native of Alaska. There are two young Hubbachs – Carol and John.

Bill Hubbach is commercial manager of KOMO, and is responsible for the sale of time on the television station.

Jean Elizabeth is the younger daughter of the Wallace Fishers. She was born in Seattle on October 15, 1922, and is the only grandchild of the O. W. Fishers who never saw her grandparents. She attended Scripps College two years and is a graduate of the University of Washington.

Canadian-born Peter McTavish is Jean's husband. They were married on February 2, 1945, and their children are Marilyn, Peter, Robert and Bruce. Peter is a partner in the Seattle insurance agency of McTavish and Ashworth.

xii

The Fishers In Business

The business enterprises with which the Fishers have been associated possess several characteristics in common. First, virtually all their business ventures have been successful – some of them extraordinarily so. Only one failure has occurred in ninety years of Fisher business history, and that was in a small company. The high percentage of success is a reflection of their over-all business acumen.

Next, the Fishers so rarely dispose of business property that it is sometimes said in Seattle financial circles that "the Fishers never sell anything." The statement is only slightly incorrect. During the past seventy years, they have disposed of their interests in two companies, but there was a special reason in each instance. They went out of the Golden Rule Stores in *1910*, primarily because of a conviction that they could employ their dollars and managerial talents more profitably and more usefully elsewhere; and forty-four years later, they sold their share of Metropolitan Building Company chiefly because the company's lease on university land was to expire soon thereafter. In other cases they have unhesitatingly rejected offers that in some cases bordered on the fabulous.

Since the time back in the early *1880*'s when O. W. Fisher outgrew the operation of one-man grist mills and sawmills, the Fishers have not usually been in stock control of the companies in which they were interested. Throughout O. W.'s fantastic business career, he was generally a minority stockholder; his dominance of any concern was on the basis of personality and achievement. The exceptions to this condition were the Fisher Mercantile Company, in which father and sons owned all the stock; and the Fisher Flouring Mills Company and its affiliates and subsidiaries, in which the members of the family have stock control through their personal holding companies and their individual holdings.

Just as O. W. rejected the idea of prospecting for gold in the Sierras back in the middle *1860*'s on the ground that the degree of hazard was too high, both he and his sons have avoided highly speculative business fields. There is, of course, some hazard in any business venture, but the Fishers have minimized this by engaging only in the more solid kinds of business. Lumbering, flour milling, banking, insurance, real estate – all of them fundamental in the national economy; all of them involving less basic risks than most lines of endeavor; all of them possessing an inherent possibility of growth. They were pioneering new fields when they entered radio and television, but their original investments were small in each case. The size of these enterprises today is primarily a reflection of the growth of new industries.

The degree of success achieved and the extent of growth in the Fisher businesses is rather obviously related to managerial skill and competence. In some instances, management has been provided by family members; in others, they have joined with other principals in assuring a management able to operate a given business successfully. In any case, their ownership share is sufficient to give them a seat on policy-making boards, and from that point of vantage they use their influence to assure strong management. It seems to be contrary to their principles to invest in a company in which they are not likely to have the strategic advantage of helping to make policy. Here and there in their portfolios will be found a stock in a large publicly-held company, but that is the exception rather than the rule.

The Fishers have rarely shown any concern over being minority stockholders, even in closely-held companies. They place infinitely greater stress upon being associated with people whose thought and business judgment runs parallel to theirs. They seem to be content with things when they are so associated; to them, it is one of the most important prerequisites to successful operation of a business. As related elsewhere, their associations with certain other families have carried through four generations – an unusual situation in industry although probably not unique.

In earlier chapters the story of the individuals has been the dominant theme, even though there have been many references to their business ventures. This one is devoted chiefly to a historical review of the companies in which they have had a part.

O. W. FISHER was connected with a series of small ventures in the production of lumber during the three decades which antedated his attaining prominence in the industry. He had worked as day laborer in a sawmill; he had managed a sawmill; he had operated several custom sawmills; he had purchased several small tracts of timber and cut the logs; he had obtained lumber contracts and purchased the logs to fill them; and he was the active partner in a firm which had a series of extensive contracts to supply railroad timbers. It was in this variety of small scale lumber businesses that he gained the experience and developed the know-how to tackle a more consequential proposition in the lumber industry.

Cordz-Fisher Lumber Company was O. W.'s first major undertaking. It had a capital of one hundred fifteen thousand dollars when it was organized in *1889*. The Cordz family put up half of that amount; O. W. and his old friend Barnett each took a one-fourth interest. His investment, sizable though it was for that period and sizable in relation to his resources, was not O. W.'s greatest contribution to the success of the company. That was in the areas of management and the exercise of business judgment. Although his experience was somewhat limited at that time, he met the challenge with a high degree of success, and Cordz-Fisher prospered almost from the day the first log was squared up and cut in its sawmill. O. W. solved production problems at Birch Tree by utilizing the talents of the Cordz brothers; Henry was sawmill superintendent, Sophus ran the woods crew, Guy was the sawyer, Louie the locomotive engineer and Julian was a plant foreman. He handled the selling himself at first and a little later joined with other sawmill operators in forming a joint sales agency. As the pattern formed, O. W. was responsible for finances and general management; it was in this obscure Ozark town that he learned how to be a successful business executive, and like most of the things he learned in the course of a remarkable life he was self-taught.

Cordz-Fisher was not the first successful lumber company in the Missouri Ozarks,[1] nor the largest, but it was early enough to be regarded as one of the pioneers and large enough to be prominent. For more than thirteen years, the average annual production of this sawmill was almost twenty-one million feet, or more than a quarter billion feet in all. It employed around three hundred men as a rule, and the trees from sixty-three thousand acres were made into lumber there. The company had very substantial earnings year after year, and the purchase of its original tract at a little more than two dollars per acre proved to be a great bargain. However, the railroad justified the sale on the ground that a large tonnage of freight was created by the sawmill.

When the company was liquidated, the one thousand one-hundred fifty shares were held by seventeen owners. O. W. Fisher then owned two hundred fifty-three shares, O. D. had twenty-six and Burr ten; their total was slightly more than O. W.'s original one-fourth interest. J. B. Barnett had two hundred twenty-three shares, and another two hundred was then held by various members of his family. Henry Cordz held two hundred nine shares, and other Cordz' had one hundred fifty-four shares among them. Ben Herr owned fifty shares. It is evident from these figures that a considerable shift took place during the history of the company, mainly away from the Cordz to the Barnett group.

As the yellow pine forest at Birch Tree fell before the axes of the Cordz-Fisher woods crew, a large part of the land was sold piecemeal for cattle range. In the course of time, a considerable crop of second-growth hardwoods came on and there were several successive cuttings for railroad ties. For many years, there was no substantial renewal of the yellow pines, primarily because of the common practice of burning over the pasturage each spring; the oaks could withstand this harsh treatment but the pines could not. About eleven thousand acres went to the government for incorporation into the national forest system, and beginning twenty years or so ago the foresters began an educational campaign designed to stop the burning off of tracts formerly covered with timber. The yellow pines reappeared, first on the government land where they were protected, but more recently on much of the privately owned land where similar measures were followed. The result is that on considerable portions, although not by any means all of the old Cordz-Fisher land, there is now growing a crop of trees similar to that which O. W. Fisher found more than seventy years ago. The government forester expects that many of the new trees will be ready for cutting within twenty-five years. It may be less than a generation before Birch Tree will again be a lumber town after a lapse which began early this century.

From the Ozark hills, O. W. went to the timbered swamplands not far from the Texas border and along the Sabine River, in Western Louisiana, for his next venture in lumber production. He and J. B. White organized the Louisiana Long Leaf Lumber Company on July 15, 1899, and the original one thousand five hundred shares were divided equally between them. However, two-thirds of O. W.'s subscription was an underwriting for such associates as Henry Cordz, J. E. Keet, J. B. Barnett and the latter's sons-in-law Andy Murphy and Tom Callahan. Captain White likewise resold a substantial part of his holding to various others.

The original ten thousand acres in Sabine Parish (County) were augmented by a series of purchases of additional timberlands, within a radius of thirty-five miles from the sawmill at Fisher. The largest of these was the great Gould tract, which was acquired in *1924* and parcelled out to several lumber companies. The Four L logged off about one hundred fifty thousand acres in all before the virgin timber was exhausted in the middle *1930*'s. Second-growth trees, mainly short leaf pine instead of the original stand of Calcasieu or long leaf, were then ready for cutting in some parts of the property. For a time, it was feared that the market would not accept second-growth lumber, but this proved to be groundless. A somewhat haphazard cutting of the second-growth trees was followed for years, but this has been systematized during the past decade into a selective system under which the company forester decides what trees are to be cut. On the average, about one-tenth of the acreage is covered each year by the woods crew. The result is that the crop on the entire one hundred fifteen thousand acres now owned by the company is constantly renewing itself.

Four L is now in its sixty-second year of continuous operation. During that time, it has produced more than one billion eight hundred million feet of pine lumber, and about one-tenth that amount of hardwood. Current rate of production is about fifteen million feet annually, although peak production reached nearly four times that amount years ago when the company had three sawmills. The manager, Clarence E. Quillin, has held that post since *1950*, but his Four L experience runs back for more than forty years. He came by the lumber tradition naturally, as his father was a longtime employe of the Missouri Lumber and Mining Company and Clarence himself was born at Grandin, Missouri, where the mill was located. O. W. Fisher was president during the first twenty-three years of the Four L, and O. D. succeeded him and has held the office to the present *(1961)*.

The success which attended the operation of Four L prompted Captain White to launch another lumber venture in Louisiana. In *1902*, he went more than a hundred miles east of Fisher to Caldwell Parish, bought two sawmills at Clarks and a large tract of pine forest, and organized the Louisiana Central Lumber Company. He was the president and moving spirit. O. W. had a comparatively small stock interest and served on the board of directors, but had no other part in the management.

Louisiana Central was followed by three more White-organized and White-managed lumber companies in that state, and in each case O. W. made a modest investment and was a board member. First was the Forest Lumber Company, at Oakdale, in *1913;* next was the Louisiana Sawmill Company at Glenmora, in *1920*, which utilized a large slice of Gould tract; and the last was the White-Grandin Lumber Company, at Slagle, in *1920*. The first of the three cut out its area in *1925*, and the other two operated until about *1935;* but Louisiana Central did not exhaust its timber supply until *1955*. There was oil in the Clarks area, and Louisiana Central's mineral rights were spun off to Louisiana Central Oil and Gas Company. The latter company has entered into leases, as has also the Four L on several occasions, but the amount of production on Four L lands to date has not been great.

Considering the strong business and sentimental ties between O. W. Fisher and J. B. White, and considering also the success which had come to their first Louisiana lumber company, it seems a bit strange that O. W.'s participation in the four companies which the captain formed subsequently was on little more than token scale. The explanation is probably to be found in the fact that three of O. W.'s sons had emigrated to Montana and that he had begun to think of following in their steps westward. Had this not been the case, it is quite possible that he might have made Louisiana his center of operations. As it was, he became only a relatively small stockholder in the four companies after Four L. Returns from these companies were satisfactory, although none of them approached the earnings level of Four L, which in turn approximated Cordz-Fisher.

It was O. D. who sparked the Fisher entry into the lumber business of Washington. Earlier herein it has been related how this young man (then thirty) had located timber tracts on the western slope of the Cascades that were for sale in the hectic days after the San Francisco fire in *1906*, how he had cruised these tracts and appraised their respective possibilities, and how the group of veteran Missouri lumbermen had been tremendously impressed with the great Douglas fir forests which they saw in the Snoqualmie Valley. O. D. of course had the backing and encouragement and guidance of his father, but when the hardy band of Missourians laid a million dollars on the line as their initial participation in Grandin-Coast Lumber Company they based their action chiefly on the premise that their youthful associate was correct in his judgment that the Snoqualmie was their promised land. Not only that, but they made him manager of the company they formed.

Events destined Grandin-Coast to be a timber company only during its first eight years, and during that time O. D. added various small acreages to the original purchase from the Rockefellers. In *1914*, Grandin-Coast joined with Weyerhaeuser Timber Company to create the Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company which built the sawmill that is operating today just as it did four and a half decades ago when

Willard Warren was manager. For the next thirty-four years, the partnership of Grandin-Coast and Weyerhaeuser continued to produce annually eighty million feet or more of lumber at this plant. In *1948* the wholly logical step of merging Grandin-Coast and Snoqualmie Falls into Weyerhaeuser was taken. The merger brought about a moderate saving in taxes to Weyerhaeuser, and absorbing the two smaller companies simplified the whole set-up. Their stockholders received Weyerhaeuser stock in exchange for their holdings, but most of them had been Weyerhaeuser stockholders for years so the transaction offered no problems in that regard. The Fishers had acquired their first Weyerhaeuser shares in *1919*, and they had added to their holdings from time to time through the intervening years. The members of the family found that when all their stock was added together, the personal holding companies along with their individual holdings, the aggregate was a large figure.

Not long after the merger, O. D. Fisher was elected to the board of Weyerhaeuser Timber Company. This was a step of significance to all concerned, for it was only the third instance in the history of the company when anyone not a descendant of the founding families had become a director. The roster of the board read like a Who's Who in Lumbering. In addition to Frederick K. Weyerhaeuser and his cousin, John Philip Weyerhaeuser, Jr., both grandsons of the man who founded the business, there were at that time Laird Bell, Norton Clapp, E. W. Davis, Edmund Hayes, Charles H. Ingram, George R. Little, W. L. McCormick, C. R. Musser and F. W. Reimers.

The Weyerhaeuser history goes back to *1860*, when a twenty-six-year-old German immigrant named Frederick E. Weyerhaeuser, and his brother-in-law Frederick C. A. Denkmann, obtained a defunct sawmill in Rock Island, Illinois.

At that time, the demand for lumber in the Middle West was enormous, and from its strategic location on the Mississippi River the new concern drew on the apparently limitless forests which bordered such northern rivers as the Wisconsin, the Chippewa, the St. Croix and the upper Mississippi; and in turn shipped lumber to the great markets of Illinois, Iowa and elsewhere. The business grew and prospered, and in the course of time the first Weyerhaeuser acquired interests in a number of lumber companies. His associates included some of the ablest talent in the industry – men like William H. Laird and the Norton brothers. For many years, St. Paul was the hub of this complicated business empire.

On January 3, 1900, the Weyerhaeuser group made the famous purchase of nine hundred thousand acres of timberlands in the Pacific Coast states, acquiring all of the land-grant timber of the Northern Pacific Railway. The Weyerhaeuser Timber Company (now the Weyerhaeuser Company) was organized to take title to the western property. At the time the Snoqualmie Falls plant was opened, Weyerhaeuser had its only northwestern sawmill in Everett, but others were built and the company has long attained pre-eminence in the industry in that area. Weyerhaeuser has pioneered many of the progressive steps in the lumber business – the company had its first fulltime forester in 1924, it developed the sustained yield system of managing timber properties and it is a leader in reforestation, with three and a half million acres in tree farms. Weyerhaeuser is one of the eighty largest corporations in amount of annual sales. O. D. is now in his thirteenth year as a director of this great company.

The criss-crossing of trails with old Missouri friends and associates is one of the most interesting facets of Fisher history. This trait played a large part in their entry into the banking business in Seattle.

An acquaintance which began at Birch Tree, Missouri, between the Fishers and a young bank examiner named Morris A. Arnold, who called on them because a brother-in-law who operated a lumberyard was one of the Cordz-Fisher customers, led to their participation in a Seattle banking venture. Arnold went on to Montana, and so did the Fishers, and each noted that the others were doing well in their respective fields of action. Several years later, when Arnold had an opportunity to enter the financial fraternity in Seattle, he invited his old friend O. D. to join in the enterprise. Management control of the First National Bank of Seattle passed in the summer of *1907* to Morris Arnold and associates, and in January, *1908*, O. D. was elected to the board of directors of the bank.

The First National, which was then about twenty-five years old, was not the most important bank in Seattle a half century ago. In fact, there were fifteen other downtown banks at that time and more were organized later. The First National had deposits of about two million dollars in *1907*. This figure grew gradually until it reached twenty-two million dollars in *1929*. That was the year of the "great merger", when the First National, the Dexter Horton National[2] and the Seattle National were consolidated, with combined deposits of ninety-two million dollars. The new bank was the largest financial institution in Seattle, and although the First National had been somewhat smaller than either of the other merged units, Arnold was made head. The new bank went through several name changes before finally emerging as the Seattle-First National Bank.

The Seattle-First went beyond the city limits in *1933* by establishing branches in Olympia and Sumner, and two years later it acquired The Spokane and Eastern Trust Company, the largest bank in Eastern Washington, and thus it became a statewide institution. Total deposits rose to two hundred nine million dollars by the end of *1940*, to six hundred fifty four million dollars in *1950*, and to nine hundred eighteen million dollars in *1960*. Today, Seattle-First is one of the great banks in the nation, ranking twenty-fifth in size in the United States. It operates ninety branches and its capital investment is more than seventy-five million dollars. Arnold continued as head of the bank until *1941*, whereupon his son Lawrence succeeded him and has been chairman and chief executive officer to the present time.

O. D. Fisher's election to the board of directors of the old First National Bank in *1908* has been followed by annual re-elections for fifty-three consecutive years. He has also been an executive committee member for the same lengthy period. During all that time, he has taken an extremely active part in the bank's affairs and is the senior director of the bank in years and in point of service.

REAL ESTATE

It was almost inevitable that the family which migrated to Seattle during the period of its most sensational growth should participate to some degree in real estate development. Although the Fishers have never been large operators in Seattle property, they have been in this business since shortly after they arrived in the city. Their main ventures in real estate have been through the Metropolitan Building Company and Fisher-White-Henry Company, but in late years there have been some individual real estate activities by individual members of the family. The most extensive of the latter have been the development enterprises of Barnett and Ethlyn, which are referred to elsewhere.

Metropolitan Building Company had a fifty year lease on ten acres of downtown land which was a part of the original campus of the University of Washington and which is still University property. The area was between Union and Seneca Streets, from midpoint between Third and Fourth Avenues to midpoint between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. It was so far from the main business districts early in this century that the pessimists decried that it would ever amount to much for business purposes, but the city was growing so rapidly that the old downtown area was inadequate. Downtown was then hemmed in on three sides by the harbor, by a lowland area over which trains entered the city on a long trestle, and by very steep hills. It was inevitable that expansion had to be into the Metropolitan tract.

When O. D. obtained a modest stake in Metropolitan in 1907, the company had only the Douglas Building (later the Post Office) and was putting up the White Building. As the company's resources permitted, it erected a series of office properties. The Henry Building went up in *1909*, as did also the main Cobb Building. Then followed the Metropolitan Theater (no longer in existence), the Stuart Building, the Stimson Building, the Olympic Hotel, the Skinner Building, the Fifth Avenue Theater, the Olympic Garage, and the Cobb Annex, besides some temporary structures. It was a sizable list of properties, and in the course of time the area was almost in the center of the Seattle loop.

O. D. was an officer and director of Metropolitan for many years. In *1954*, as the time neared for the lease to expire, the company was sold.

Fisher-White-Henry was organized in *1910*, partly because the Missouri group wanted to speculate in tideflat property and partly because eleven lots were available through bank foreclosure and the bank wanted a buyer. As indicated earlier, these lots were on Fourth Avenue South. After the lots were filled in, business properties were built and leased on longtime arrangements. In recent years, additional lots were purchased, and the total number is now twenty-two. O. D. Fisher has been president of Fisher-White-Henry since *1922*, and for some time the active management has been in the hands of John Locke and Ken Fisher.

The marina on Lake Union was a Fisher-White-Henry venture, beginning in *1939*. It consists of covered outdoor moorings and an office building which also houses a restaurant.

The Metropolitan proved to be a good investment, as did Fisher-White-Henry.

FLOUR MILLING

Despite his diversity of interests, O. W. Fisher for many years regarded his occupation as that of flour miller. It was not until he reached middle age that he began to think of himself as a lumberman. When the Census of *1880* was taken, he described himself as a miller when with equal truth he could have answered that he was a sawmill operator, a banker or a storekeeper. He once told a lumber magazine that he engaged in lumbering only when he could not find work in a grist mill. The flour dust which lodged in his hair during his apprenticeship in Uriah Nurse's Ohio mill was never fully brushed out, even though for more than two decades *(1882-1903)* he had nothing to do with milling.

The Gallatin Valley Milling Company, which O. W. and his sons purchased in May *1903*, was his first experience in modern flour milling. Prior to that, he had milled wheat only on stone buhrs, and as a boy he had mastered the difficult arts of "dressing" and "setting" a millstone. Millstones produced the grist not only in the mills of Ohio in which he worked during his boyhood, but this was true of the mills on the pleasant plains of Ontario and of the mills which he operated later in Missouri. However, Gallatin Valley had corrugated steel rolls and middlings purifiers, equipment with which he was not familiar. The little mill at Belgrade taught O. W. the secrets of making flour by the process which had made stone buhrs obsolete, and it did the same in turn for O. D., Dan and Wallace, all of whom served there as managers.

Except for a short period when the Fishers first acquired the Belgrade mill, the operation of that plant was not the principal business of Gallatin Valley Milling Company. As many millers do, they became buyers and merchandizers of wheat. Their country elevators supplied their own mill and they were sources of supply for exporters and other millers. The business has continued in this way to the present time, Gallatin Valley now having thirty-one country elevators scattered over the principal wheat-growing areas of Montana. The Belgrade mill was operated for a couple of weeks more than half a century, closing in June *1953* because it was no longer an efficient unit for the production of flour.

After Fisher Flouring Mills Company was organized, Gallatin Valley became its principal supplier of wheat. Gallatin Valley was exclusively a Fisher property while the milling company in Seattle was not, a situation which could easily lead to internal trouble. It was solved, at Fisher suggestion, by a committee of non-Fisher directors appraising Gallatin Valley properties, and then instead of a direct merger the two companies were tied together by means of an inseparable stock certificate. The same device was extended to White-Dulany Company, which had a line of grain warehouses and elevators in Eastern Washington, so that the owner of one share of Fisher stock also owned one-fourth of a share of Gallatin Valley and one-twelfth of a share of White-Dulany. The arrangement is still in effect, after almost a half century.

Small though the Belgrade mill was, it evidently whetted O. W.'s appetite for another and larger flour mill. The port of Seattle through which flowed a stream of wheat to foreign shores seemed to him to be a logical location. Instead of wheat, he reasoned, why not flour? It was that idea which led to the organization of Fisher Flouring Mills Company, which was incorporated on April *4*, *1910*, by O. W. Fisher, J. B. White, G. W. Dulany, W. W. Warren and O. D. Fisher, after a preliminary meeting in Kansas City three weeks earlier. The capital stock of the company was four hundred thousand dollars, and the list of subscribers was headed by O. W. Fisher with one thousand one hundred sixty-five shares. Other Fishers in the group were O. D., with four hundred shares, Will P. and Burr with one hundred fifty each and Willard Warren with three hundred fifty-five. The combined Fisher holdings were two thousand two hundred twenty shares out of four thousand, the only instance in any major undertaking in which they had outright control. Other original stockholdings were five hundred fifty shares by the Dulanys, five hundred by the Grandins, two hundred fifty by J. B. White, two hundred fifty by the Cordz family, one hundred by J. B. Barnett, and one hundred thirty divided among three Seattle bankers – M. A. Arnold, J. A. Hall and J. T. McVay. The officers were O. W. Fisher, president; J. B. White, vice-president; O. D. Fisher, secretary and manager; and Will P. Fisher, treasurer.

The Fisher mill was built on the tideflats of Harbor Island. Much of the fill for this area was dredged from the west waterway and from the Duwamish River channel. The original mill tract was eight acres and subsequently it was expanded to a little more than twice that size. Harbor Island was a brand new industrial area when the mill was built, and it was soon covered by a network of rail switch tracks which brought grain and mill supplies to the mill door. Cargoes could be loaded directly on shipboard, as the mill had its own dock.

The mill was formally opened on June *1*, *1911*, although grinding began two months earlier. Its initial capacity was two thousand barrels[3] of flour daily. The size was doubled in *1917* and was increased an equal amount in *1924*. The capacity reached fifteen thousand cwts. daily through additions made in *1947*, making it the fifth largest flour milling plant in the United States. Originally the mill was divided into two complete units which could be operated singly or together, but the additions finally brought the number of units up to seven. One of the units is presently being converted to pneumatic operation. Wheat storage capacity was five hundred thousand bushels in 1911, but was increased in 1929 and subsequently until it is now two million seven hundred fifty thousand bushels.

During the early years, the major business of the mill was the production of flour for the household trade, and as late as 1923, the first year for which a breakdown exists, this outlet was in first place. However, the trend away from home baking to commercial baking was well under way and by the middle 1920's the bakery outlets comprised the greater volume. In recent years, excluding exports and government purchases, the division between bakery and family flours has been more than ninety per cent of the former to less than ten per cent of the latter. Equally striking is the change in the family trade from large packages (mostly ninety-eight and forty-nine pounds) in the first world war era to the two's, five's and ten's of the present. Where once the flour packaged for the home was chiefly all-purpose, now a considerable proportion consists of specialties – cake, pancake, and biscuit mixes, among others.

Fisher's bakery flour volume has grown about in proportion to the growth of bakeries in its trade area. However, it was heavily concentrated in Washington and Oregon for years; although some California bakers bought their flour from Fisher's when the mill was opened, the California market as a whole did not come into its own until after the mid-1930's. Thereafter it forged well ahead of the Northwest, but it has been slipping somewhat the past few years because of radical changes in transportation which put a heavy handicap upon Northwest mills shipping to California destinations. The uninitiated should note that bakery flour is marketed as a bulk commodity, usually in large quantities and at very narrow margins – a method which is wholly dissimilar to merchandizing brand-name grocery items for household use. It is not an easy business to serve, and is becoming more difficult because of the numerous bakery consolidations. It is a curious fact that a surprising portion of Fisher's bakery customers have their buying offices in New York, even though some of their plants are within sight of the mill office. The responsibility for this department has rested for many years upon the shoulders of J. S. (Davey) Davis, who was Will P. Fisher's understudy for a long time. Davey's association with the company dates to three months after the mill started, when he began as a billing clerk. He has long since reached the point where he is recognized as one of the leading sales managers in the industry. He is a vice president and director.

Export volume proved to be surprisingly small in most years until after *1918*, usually running around fifteen per cent of the mill's volume. Then for more than a dozen years, the proportion of overseas business was almost doubled. It suffered materially through the *1930's* under the impact of collapse of foreign currencies and the elevation of American wheat prices above world levels. There was a revival for several years before the second world war, a plummet almost to zero during the war, followed by a difficult but successful renewal of flour exports after the war. Then the great China market was lost in the Red takeover and the Philippine market was reduced and finally closed to imports by the government of that nation as a means of fostering its own mills. These terrific ups and downs have of course had a great effect upon the welfare of the milling company, and yet the overseas business is sufficiently desirable that Fisher's have chosen to remain in the export field.

The leader in Fisher's export work for almost forty-four years was Stanley Allen, who often described himself as "a Manxman born in Liverpool, married in San Francisco, children born in Hong Kong and my home is in Seattle". As heretofore noted, he was the first employe of the company and the need for an experienced export man[4] was so great that he was assigned to that task although the plan was at first to make him assistant manager. For years, Stanley travelled the highways and byways of the China seacoast, the Philippines and elsewhere in the Orient, and in Central and South America and even in Europe. The result was an export business which rated well ahead of that of most competitors. Stanley was recognized as the dean of flour export managers for a full quarter century before he passed away in *1954*.

Wallace Fisher became general superintendent of the mill in *1923*, succeeding his brother Burr. He was also made assistant manager in *1930* and elected as executive vice-president in *1933*. He continued in these positions until late in *1940* when he re-entered the Navy. His regime was marked by a great deal of activity in research and the perfection of various operating techniques. Chief among them was the installation of a planning department, development of a visual control panel in the elevator, and a series of devices which revolutionized the flour warehouse. The latter included the round turning table for sorting and handling packages, and the floor skid and movable pallet for piling and loading stock. There was also a great deal of research in operating techniques.

The management of plant operation was revised to its present form in *1946*, when William L. Haley was made vice president in charge of production and products control.

Since before the first world war he had been in charge of the laboratory, and was widely known in technical milling circles. Dewey Robbins became general superintendent at about the same time, and they continue to hold these posts. It is something of a measure of their abilities that both have served as presidents of their respective professional societies – Haley in the American Association of Cereal Chemists and Robbins in the Association of Operative Millers – and, oddly enough, in the same year *(1952)*.

In *1954*, the company embarked upon the production of bulgor wheat and is the only major American manufacturer of the product. Bulgor is a rice substitute made from wheat, the process involving parboiling, drying, crushing and recooking. It is an ancient Armenian dish, and is especially adapted for use in Asiatic areas where fuel is scarce and costly. Several large shipments have been made to these areas and to Puerto Rico, the Middle East and Latin America, and the business is increasing. Bulgor is also being sold by Fisher's in small packages to the gourmet trade in this country.

The principal breakfast cereal produced by Fisher's is called *Zoom*. In *1942*, when Kenneth Fisher, then in charge of grocery products sales, was looking for a new item to add to the grocery line, he came across a flaked cereal, which he liked, in the mill laboratory. After a market test brought an encouraging number of repeat orders, it was decided to give the product a wider test, and for several days in January *1943* the Seattle newspapers carried announcements that "Zoom is coming". The Z-day for Zoom was also the day of the worst snowstorm that Seattle had in years. There were no newspapers, no means of transportation and everybody had to stay home with little to do except listen to the radio. All day long there were frequent "plugs" for Zoom on all the local stations. The new product was off the ground in its home city, and within the next year Zoom was established all along the Pacific Coast.

Another fascinating story about Zoom has to do with its introduction to a larger area. It was decided to use a colored war map of the Far East as a premium, and the launching day happened to coincide with General MacArthur's landing in Lingayen Gulf. The map and the product were both smash hits. Zoom has distribution throughout the western half of the United States, and there are dreams of the day when it will be established nationally.

In addition to those named above, the department managers of Fisher Flouring Mills Company are the following: W. Kirby Holmes, vice president and export manager; A. J. McFarlane, vice president and feed department manager; Llewellyn F. Wing, secretary; E. L. Irvine, assistant secretary and office manager; F. W. Fuller, traffic manager; M. L. Swanson, grain merchandizer; Robert L. Erzinger, grocery products sales and advertising manager; H. B. Rogers, director of industrial relations; Wm. A. Dunks, credit manager; and W. Donald Moore, auditor.

Through pure chance, the company entered the radio broadcasting field in *1926*, and twenty-seven years later it established a television station and now is in process of establishing a station in Portland. These businesses are conducted through wholly-owned subsidiaries, except for the Portland station, but in certain respects they overshadow the parent company.

The leadership of this diversified and complex empire which comprises the milling company has been provided by Fishers throughout its history. It has had but three presidents – O. W. from *1910* to *1922*, O. D. from *1922* to *1948* and John Locke from *1948* to the present. It has likewise had three general managers – O. D. from *1910* to *1942*, John from *1942* to *1960*, and now Ken Fisher. The post of chairman of the board was created in *1948* and has been held only by O. D., who by virtue of the post is chief executive officer. Dan has been president of Gallatin Valley and White-Dulany since *1948*, when he succeeded O. D., who had held these posts after *1922*.

The directorate of Fisher Flouring Mills Company also has a distinctly veteran character. The average service of the board members is almost twenty-four years, even though it has had five new directors since the end of the war. O. D. heads the group in longevity as well as in rank, with fifty-one years. Then follow L. C. Henry forty-four years, Dan forty, Wallace thirty-seven, John Locke twenty-five and J. S. Davis twenty-three years. The "newcomers" are Lawrence M. Arnold, with fifteen years (his father was a director before him for thirty-six years), Ken twelve, Bill Warren eight, W. M. Lingo, Jr. four, and Don Graham two years. Mac Lingo succeeded his uncle, George W. Dulany, Jr., who had been a board member for almost forty-one years.

Another feature of Fisher Flouring Mills Company is its twenty-five-year club, membership in which is limited to persons who have been employed by the company for at least a quarter of a century. There are currently in the club one hundred and sixty-four members, ninety-four of whom are still working for Fisher Flouring Mills Company. This is a significant number when it is remembered that the mill employs less than six hundred persons.

Fisher Flouring Mills Company has a capital of about two million dollars, and realized surplus of more than three and a half times that amount. During its fifty years' history, the milling group (including Gallatin Valley and White-Dulany and several small subsidiaries but excluding radio and television) has operated in the black forty-six times. The last fiscal year in which red ink was needed for the milling group was *1938*. As a rule, the Fisher milling group enjoys conspicuously better returns than does the general average of the milling industry of the United States.

GENERAL INSURANCE

General America Corporation is a holding company which owns all the stock of four insurance companies which have their home offices in Seattle. Total assets of these companies was almost two hundred eighty-five million dollars on December *31, 1960*.

General Insurance Company of America is the oldest and largest of the General America group. It entered the business on May *1, 1923*. It is thus very much of a youngster when compared with the age of a great majority of its competitors, but it is quite a lusty youngster which shows no signs of having reached its full growth. This group, which writes fire, marine, automobile, casualty and life insurance, stands in fifteenth place among all American stock agency insurance companies in the matter of premium income.

Hawthorne K. Dent was a Seattle insurance man who founded the General America group. He was a highly successful insurance salesman who reached a top post in a mutual company before he was forty, but he nevertheless was dissatisfied with the set pattern of the business. His conclusion was that the strongest features of the mutuals should be combined with the strongest features of the old-line companies, and that such a combination would give policyholders a better value for their insurance dollars; but when he proposed such a plan to his mutual associates they were horrified. He believed so strongly in his idea that he gave up a lucrative position and undertook to organize a company which would embody his idea.

Dent was fortunate to enlist the hearty support of George S. Long of Tacoma, general manager of Weyerhaeuser Timber Company, a towering figure in the lumber business in which he spent nearly sixty-five years – the first thirty years of this century in Washington, the preceding twenty years in Wisconsin during the halcyon days of lumbering in that state. It was Long who opened many doors to Dent, it was the prestige of Long which brought together a blue-ribbon board of directors – men like W. H. Talbot, George J. Osgood, C. D. Stimson, J. A. Humbird, A. W. Middleton and Henry McCleary. However, he got a "no" on three occasions from his longtime friend and associate, O. D. Fisher, who insisted that he simply didn't have the time to get into another business, but O. D. failed to reckon with the resourcefulness of the man from Tacoma. The day the company was incorporated, O. D. was in Manila, P. I., on a business trip and there came a cablegram that a mutual friend had agreed to act as an incorporator-director provided O. D. would replace him on the board.

The stratagem worked, and there was more to come. When the first board meeting took place, there was a quick series of actions. The director friend resigned, O. D. was elected to fill the vacancy, Long called C. D. Stimson to the chair, then Long resigned as board chairman and the resignation was accepted, and then Long's motion to make O. D. board chairman was adopted. Long remarked later, "If ever there was a railroading job done in business, that was it." That was how O. D. got a job for which he did not have time, but he filled the chairmanship for twenty-nine years; then after a five-year "vacation" from that office, but still serving on the board, he was chosen again to be board chairman.

The basic feature of General Insurance Company which differed from nearly all other companies in the field at that time was that it was a stock company which nevertheless proposed to pay policyholders, as well as stockholders, an annual dividend based upon the company's experience. It had other fundamentals which were not then common in stock companies, the outstanding being a rigid selection of risks. As time went on, the company inaugurated a number of other "firsts" in insurance, such as the annual renewal plan, a blanket liability policy, and in recent years direct billing.

The fledgling company was greeted with loud and strident Bronx cheers on the part of its rivals. Its plan of operation was denounced as unsound, it was ridiculed and agencies which placed business with General were boycotted by many other companies. Somehow Dent had recruited a stouthearted bank of salesmen who believed in his basic idea almost as much as he did, and despite the newness of the company and a lot of other obstacles they sold enough insurance the first year to assure success. The noise made by the opposition served to advertise General's services and in more than a few instances it brought in more business than it drove away. The croakers who originally gave General three to five years lengthened their predictions a few years at a time, but before two decades were past a number of the stock companies were themselves writing participating insurance and finding ways to provide preferred risks with preferred rates.

Writing preferred risks only was more than mere sales talk. It was a practice rigidly adhered to, and with no exceptions. Even the directors were unable to obtain concessions. In the yellowed minutes of the underwriting committee for January *4, 1924,* is a memo of rejection of a proposed open policy on grain and feed warehouses of Fisher Flouring Mills Company in the Puyallup Valley because they were substandard fire risks; and on the same day they rejected an application from C. D. Stimson for insurance on a combination store and apartment building for the same reason. Two of the most powerful directors turned down because their properties were not desirable risks – no wonder General's loss rate then and through all the years to the present has consistently been the lowest in the entire insurance industry.

Two years after General Insurance Company was launched, General Casualty Company appeared. However, the latter was merged with its brother company in *1957*. The other members of the General group are First National Insurance Company, organized in *1928*, and writing primarily fire coverage in limited fields; Safeco, formed in *1953*, mainly automobile insurance in competition with direct writers; and Lifeco, which in *1957* began to issue life insurance policies. The parent holding company, General America Corporation, was organized in *1929*. The General America group has division offices in or near Atlanta, Cincinnati, Dallas, Denver, Los Angeles, New York, St. Louis, San Francisco and Vancouver, B. C. The companies are licensed to do business in forty-eight states and in five Canadian provinces.

Hawthorne Dent was president of the General Group for twenty-nine years, and then chairman of the board for his remaining five years of life. Willis L. Campbell, who succeeded to the presidency in *1952*, has continued the great Dent tradition; and when the latter passed away Campbell led the board in asking O. D. Fisher to resume the chairmanship.

The original paid-in capital of General Insurance Company was three hundred fifty thousand dollars. The present capital and surplus of General America is one hundred two million dollars. O. D. made a modest original investment in this stock, and as he began to gain a full grasp of the company's possibilities he and other Fishers added substantially to their holdings. The Fishers as a group own considerably more General shares than does any other group, and the present value of their interest is many, many times their original investment. Their combined holdings of General America are worth more than their holdings of any other security.

Throughout the entire history of General America, O. D. Fisher has taken a most extraordinary interest in its affairs. He reads virtually everything written about insurance, and it is appropriate to record here what a great national authority on insurance said recently about his contribution to the success of the company: "It is my deliberate judgment that Mr. Fisher knows more about insurance than any other layman in America, and in fact, he knows more about the subject than do nine-tenths of insurance executives."

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Radio broadcasting was new during the early and middle *1920*'s. At that time, the business possibilities of radio were largely unexplored. Many of the stations were operated as playthings or hobbies, and when an owner became unable or unwilling to continue footing the bills there usually was someone else ready to bear the burden in exchange for the thrill of being a radio operator. Most of the equipment in use was jerry-built. Somehow a man named Birt Fisher found his way into this new and exciting field in *1926* – it could hardly be called a business – by leasing a Seattle station which had had quite a checkered history.

Birt Fisher had been a telephone lineman and repairman in Idaho and then in the Spokane area. After he migrated to Seattle, he had obtained the nickelodeon concession on the Blackball ferries which shuttle between Seattle and Bremerton. He operated the radio station for several months – long enough to be convinced that it had a basic value, and also long enough to realize that a successful station would require financial backing. However, he had no money, and in the search for backers he went to see the Fishers at the mill. Although they had never before heard of their namesake, the brothers quickly became intrigued with the idea of entering a new and unknown field.

As we have learned earlier, a new company was formed to become the owner of the broadcasting license. It was called Fisher's Blend Station, Inc., thus bearing the name of the principal flour brand of the mill. O. D. proposed that Birt should be the manager and that he have a one-third interest in the business, the remaining two-thirds to be owned by Fisher Flouring Mills Company. Birt allowed that it was a good proposition but that he had no money to put up for his share – not even five hundred dollars, when O. D. added that the new company need have a capital of only fifteen hundred dollars and that the additional money needed for transmitter and other starting expense would be loaned by the milling company.

"We'll advance you the five hundred dollars, and you can pay off the loan in monthly installments," said O. D., and that was how the Fishers entered the radio business. Wallace Fisher became president of Fisher's Blend Station, Inc., and he was chiefly responsible for building the transmitter, which was located at the rear of the mill office and completed in five weeks. A studio in the Cobb Building was leased, and KOMO went on the air for the first time on December *31, 1926*. The new station began with a schedule of fourteen hours of live programs daily, something which was almost unknown at that time in the industry. This was possible because of commitments from leading business concerns in Seattle to act as sponsors, through a company called Totem Broadcasters, Inc., which O. D. organized. The station had a staff of sixty-five and it was the largest employer of musicians in the state. It was many years before a record was played on the station.

Although Birt had little previous radio experience, and although he was a diamond in the rough in many respects, he proved to have an excellent sense of showmanship and he developed a knack for radio station management. It was not long before KOMO attracted a good public following in and around Seattle, and it was well established in almost record time. When the National Broadcasting Company extended its coverage to the Pacific Coast in April 1927, KOMO became one of the charter members of its Pacific Coast network, with O. D. taking an active part in the organization of that network.

The story how the Fishers entered the radio field and the arrangement which they worked out with Birt is a precise parallel to what O. W. Fisher did back in 1889 with Henry Cordz and his brothers. O. W. could easily have squeezed them out of their own lumber company, but instead he made them his partners and they became well-to-do in the process. It would have been equally easy for O. W.'s sons to have maneuvered Birt out of the radio station, or in any event to have limited him to a salaried job, but they made him manager and a part owner.

The one kilowatt station of 1926 was increased in power to five kilowatts in 1937 and to fifty kilowatts in 1948. Station KJR in Seattle was leased in 1933 from National Broadcasting Company at the urgent request of the latter, and it was purchased in *1941*. Under the duopoly rule adopted by the Federal Communications Commission in *1944*, it became necessary for Fisher's Blend Station, Inc., to divest itself of one of the stations, and so KJR was spun off to Birt Fisher in exchange for his one-third stock interest. He sold KJR a few years later to Marshall Field Enterprises and retired from the business.

When the fantastic device called television became a commercial reality, KOMO was among the earliest in the nation and the second in Seattle to apply for a license. Although a construction permit was obtained in June *1948*, it was set aside soon thereafter because by that time there was one more applicant than channels available. Before a hearing could be held to determine which applicants were best qualified, the government agency instituted the famous freeze on all unassigned channels. This lasted a surprisingly long time – three and a half years, and then it was necessary for applicants to refile and to claim a specific channel. KOMO moved at once, but other interests wanted the same channel. In order to avoid a further great delay and the necessity of a hearing, two applicants joined forces and formed a new company to operate KOMO-TV. The station went on the air in *1953*, more than five years after KOMO had taken its first steps in the field. The new company was called Fisher's Television Company, two-thirds of its stock being owned by Fisher's Blend Station, Inc. The remaining interest was held by two Portland men, but they took little part in the management or operation of the station and in *1959* they sold their share to Fisher's Blend Station, Inc., which is therefore now the sole owner of the television company.

Although KOMO was handicapped by a late start, and although other Seattle stations had won their audiences before the Fisher television station was launched, the lost time was gradually recovered through excellence of programs and high standards of television performance. Most surveys made in the area during the past five years show KOMO-TV to be either first or second among Seattle stations in popularity and following – more of them first than second. It has long been one of the prestige stations in the United States.

What seemed at the time to be a stunning blow was struck at KOMO in October *1958*, when National Broadcasting Company gave notice of severance of connections. The action has never been explained and is as much a mystery today as it was then to the station officials. It was a shocking thing for the network to do; KOMO had been the means whereby National's Pacific Coast network was established and the relationship had continued for thirty-two years. However, the NBC cancellation proved to be a blessing in disguise. It brought about a connection with the American Broadcasting Company, a young and vigorous organization that is rising rapidly in the sphere of aerial communications. The final effect may well prove to be a plus.

An expansion step was initiated in *1958*, when the Fisher Broadcasting Company was organized to operate a television station in Portland. Fisher's Blend Station, Inc., owns sixty per cent of the stock and four leading business men in Portland the remainder. An application was made for an open channel, a counter application was filed by the Baker interests of Tacoma and a battle royal took place before the Federal Communications Commission. The examiner recommended that the Fisher application be granted. Final decision allocating the channel to Fisher Broadcasting Company was received February *23*, *1961*. Plans have been made for the construction and operation of a television station in the Oregon metropolis.

Wallace Fisher has been president of Fisher's Blend Station, Inc., since the company was organized thirty-five years ago. He has played a large part in the business, notably in the mechanical and technical field, and after Birt Fisher left the organization in *1944* he managed the station for about eight years. He planned the construction of the great new studio building at Fourth Avenue North and Denny Way. However, since *1952* he has been inactive.

Beginning a decade ago, more and more of the KOMO management responsibilities devolved upon Bill Warren and he was made general manager in *1952* and executive vice president and general manager in *1955*. He holds the same position in the new Portland company. His broadcasting career began in *1933* with a minor job at the radio station, but within a year he was program director – a post he continued to hold except for his military service until he moved up. Bill is an intense perfectionist who has led the staff to a high level of performance which is recognized throughout the broadcasting industry.

The variety and importance of problems in radio and television which require high level attention has often drawn several Fishers into certain phases of KOMO operations, especially its relations with government agencies and with the networks as well as plans for expansion. These assignments have not gone regularly to anyone, but have been divided among O. D., Don Graham, Bill Warren, and John Locke, and often have been shared by them. Don is vice president of the radio and television companies, and his services have often extended into the policy-making sphere in these companies, as well as in a legal capacity. John is likewise vice-president, and he made many of the moves which led to the formation of the Portland company. Then, too, Dan Fisher has also been one of the powers in radio and television operation. O. D. is president of both the television companies, and Ken is treasurer.

There are several other Fishers on the staff. John L. Locke, Jr., held several minor positions before becoming administrative assistant to the general manager more than ten years ago. Bill Hubbach is television sales manager, and Phelps Fisher is on the sales staff.

The radio station was in the black from the day it was first on the air. Over the years, its earnings were excellent but by the nature of the business which was pioneering a new field a large share was plowed back to finance new and improved equipment. In recent years, radio has of course taken a back seat to television, but the needs of a new and constantly changing business in technological improvements have required the retention of a sizable part of the earnings.

xiii

Fisher Memorabilia

Virtually nothing is known about O. W. Fisher's relationships with his mother and with his Dodge grandparents, who lived no more than twelve miles from his early boyhood home at Wheelersburg. From the fact that O. W. left school to work in a sawmill at the age of eight when his father passed away, it can be assumed that his mother had no means and probably also that the Dodges were unable to help her to any extent. Grandfather Dodge was fifty-eight at the time, but it is not likely he was an invalid as he lived another twenty years. After O. W. left the Portsmouth area, he returned from time to time and worked in a flour mill there at various periods including one after he was married. No record remains as to whether he visited at

Portsmouth after that. His deep feeling for family ties, however, makes it safe to assume that he maintained a contact with his mother as long as she lived. The Dodges died in *1870* and *1872*, and O. W.'s mother lived in Portsmouth until her death on November *24*, *1873*.

During the first eight years of their marriage, O. W. and Euphemia were often in the Ontario community where her people lived. In fact, they made their home in that area for more than two years as O. W. worked in a grist mill and later operated one under lease. Several years after the Fishers moved to Missouri, Euphemia's father gave up the carpenter trade and moved to the settlement of Sequim Falls, in the raw country east of Georgian Bay, a hundred miles or more north of London, Ontario. There he lived for about thirty-five years on a small farm which he wrested out of the wilderness, until his death in *1910* at the age of eighty-nine. Several of his children lived in the same general area. Euphemia and her children visited the Robinsons at Sequim Falls a number of times, but there are no recollections of visits after about *1900*.

* * *

O. W. Fisher had three older brothers. The amount of information available about them is on the meager side. The eldest, Andrew, was located at Bear Springs, Tennessee, where he was employed in a charcoal blast furnace producing pig iron out of brown hematite ore. O. D. visited him in *1904*. He does not recall how long his uncle had been in that business. Brother Alford was mate on a Mississippi River steamboat for many years, his home being in St.

Louis. He retired in the late *1890*'s and thereafter lived in Springfield and Bozeman with O. W. and Euphemia; he died in Bozeman in *1911*. Brother Dan was a farmer near Humansville for at least thirty years and perhaps longer; after his wife passed away, he lived in a hotel at Bolivar and was there as late as *1913*.

❧

All previously published accounts of O. W. Fisher's life seem to have been taken from a two-page article about him which appeared in a book of sketches of leading figures in the lumber industry, published in *1906* by *The American Lumberman*. His obituary, the memorial booklet published by the family, and the material which appears in state historical records are all easily traceable to this article. The circumstances under which it was prepared are not known, but it is presumed that it was written by a staff member or other professional writer upon the basis of an interview or correspondence with the subject.

Unfortunately, there are two errors of some importance in the article. These are the statements that O. W. was taken prisoner at the battle of Corinth and that the family did not return from Ontario to Missouri until March *1876*. The first is disproved by the records of the War Department and the second is at variance with the fact that the Fishers were at Orleans in the latter part of *1875*. These errors raise some question as to the accuracy of the balance of the sketch, and for the most part the question cannot be resolved. Some of the dates in the latter part of the sketch check out against information obtained from other sources, and the writer is inclined to think that most of the article may be reasonably relied upon. He has, however, been cautioned by one of O. W.'s sons that the father was not always accurate in his reference to dates.

* * *

Some miles west of the Missouri community where O. W. tended his store is a prairie country which in the *1870's* was used for cattle range. The cowboys from that area were accustomed to come to town periodically to celebrate their paydays, and most of them managed to squander their wages in short order. One of them bemoaned the habit, whereupon O. W. persuaded him to divide his wages into equal parts – one of which went into O. W.'s pocket for safekeeping until the spree was over. A few others began to do the same thing. It is said that these experiences gave O. W. and Judge Barnett the impetus for founding the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank at Humansville. The first cowboy whose money O. W. safeguarded was Billy Hall, who later was one of the Humansville group which made a success of operating Golden Rule Stores. His store was at Gardiner, Montana, and some of his descendants are still in that area.

* * *

One of the legends circulated among some of his less respectful descendants is that they have been told by their elders that O. W. didn't really operate a grist mill in Kentucky, that it was actually a distillery. The story is possibly true, but more likely it is not. O. W. first went to Kentucky in *1857* for three years; he was then fifteen and he worked at the crossroads point of Springville. That place was in Scott County, within a mile of Bourbon County, and a great number of stills were operated in that area. Grist mills were about equally common, for wheat was one of the main crops in the Kentucky bluegrass region from the time of the first settlements around *1780*. O. W. operated the same plant for a few months in *1869*, and is known to have referred to it as a mill. That is not proof conclusive, and the case against it being a distillery rests in part upon O. W.'s lifelong dislike for saloons and their keepers even though he enjoyed an occasional drink; and upon Euphemia's militance against liquor. It is next to impossible that she would have tolerated his running a distillery even had he been disposed, and the latter is doubtful in itself.

* * *

Although his four older sons all had automobiles at an earlier date, it was not until O. W. moved to Bozeman in *1904* that he owned a car. His first was a Stevens-Duryea, a large touring car. O. W. had no wish to drive, and he employed a chauffeur and continued to do so the remainder of his life. It is said that only once did he drive a car. Through some mix-up, he found himself in Belgrade, Montana, on one occasion with a car and no driver. He took the wheel and somehow managed to navigate the sixteen miles back to Bozeman without incident, but traffic conditions in those days were not quite like they are today. For that matter, neither were the roads – nor the automobiles.

O. W. Fisher was a great traveler for his day. It has been said jokingly that he never was home for two full weeks at a time, and that was not far from the truth after he began to engage in the lumber business in Missouri. He was on the go a large share of the time, from Humansville or Springfield to Birch Tree, to Kansas City, occasionally to St. Louis, or away on selling or scouting trips. After his empire grew, he spent a considerable share of his time going from one establishment to another. He continued to do this, although perhaps on a somewhat lesser scale, until the last year of his life.

For some reason that is not clear, O. W. did not travel in the East to any extent. He took Lula to Washington in her school days, and he accompanied Euphemia on several occasions when she visited the Robinsons in Ontario; and he may have been East (meaning beyond St. Louis) no more than two or three other times after he settled in Missouri. Nearly all of his travelling was on business, although now and then he went to Shrine conventions or G. A. R. reunions.

Beginning about the middle *1890*'s and continuing for a dozen years or more, the Fishers travelled about the West nearly every summer. There were rarely as few as a half-dozen on these trips, and sometimes there were more than twice that number along. At first the trips were explorations of Colorado, but after a few years they went to Yellowstone National Park and then to out-of-the-way resorts in Montana. Their custom was to hire one or more stage coaches and drivers for trips of a week or two. Sometimes but not always these were fishing expeditions, more often simply tours of exploration and viewing the wonders of mountain scenery. O. W. gloried in these expeditions, as they enabled him to see more of his family than he could ordinarily do.

Along with practically every other consequential shipper in the "good old days" before the distribution of passes was prohibited, O. W. was the recipient of an annual pass from practically every railroad and steamship line. It was also good for the members of his family. This was a great boon in the days before O. W. became affluent, and the Fishers made wide use of the favor. However, when passes were outlawed around *1906*, O. W. continued to travel about as much as before.

* * *

O. W. Fisher was a stalwart Republican, his political beliefs having been forged at a time when nearly all Union men adhered to that party. His first presidential vote was cast for Abraham Lincoln in *1864*. In Missouri, he lived in a county where his party was the predominant one; he took part locally in political matters and was especially active in support of J. B. Barnett when that friend ran for office. Nearly all of his descendants have likewise affiliated with the same party, although some of them are considerably more liberal in their views than O. W. was. One of his sons once committed the apostasy of voting for William Jennings Bryan. That was in *1896*. Will P. then lived in Colorado, which was a hotbed of free silver sentiment; feelings ran as high there as they do now in the South on segregated schools. Anyone who harbored even a friendly thought for McKinley was ostracized. Will P. was not one to compromise on principle, but he evidently persuaded himself that the silver program would restore prosperity to the nation.

Although Will P. had only about half of Bryan's girth, he was sometimes mistaken for the Great Commoner. In profile, he bore a great resemblance to Bryan, as he had a considerable mane at the back of his head but was bald on top.

The only Fisher to hold office, or even to run for office, was Peter, youngest son of Will P. He was elected as a member of the city council in Ellensburg, Washington, in 1955, but served only a few months before he was transferred by the company to Seattle.

* * *

One of the legends that have been passed along to Will P.'s descendants is that their forebear went broke as a storekeeper in Colorado. The story could be true, although no verification has been found. The great panic of 1893 sent many large and well established concerns in Colorado to the wall, and the force of the depression was not spent for several years. The buying public did without things to an extent that this generation can hardly conceive, and it may be that the Golden Rule Store was in trouble. However, there is no mention of any such disaster in Estelle's diary, although she refers repeatedly to the "awful hard times". In any event, the store did not close and the worst that happened is that O. W. may have had to come to the rescue temporarily.

* * *

Estelle Fisher kept a strict record of every cent she ever spent from the day she was married to the day she died. It is all set down in old-fashioned account books in a neat and precise hand. She always managed her household so that she had money left to give away – to her church, to missions, to quite a variety of charitable organizations and to unfortunate friends. In her later years she made generous contributions to several churches, and she sent nine boys (besides her own) through the university. She lived simply but was not stingy.

Estelle's account books also usually contain a few entries each month relating to the principal events of the time. Thus they constitute a sort of limited diary.

* * *

Ben Herr Fisher, second son of Will P. and Estelle, was named for a Missouri character who was a great friend of the family. Ben Herr was a Pennsylvania Dutchman who lived at Humansville for a time and then became a travelling salesman for a wholesale grocery in Springfield. The Cordz-Fisher store at Birch Tree was a good customer, and he called there often. The store had a clerk named Bertie Tillery, a spinster who was a cousin of Mrs. J. B. Barnett. Ben was a middle-aged bachelor. One day he called Ollie Fisher aside and asked him for a special favor – would Ollie find out whether Bertie would consider marrying him (Ben). The young store manager carried out the request by going direct to the lady in question.

"Hm-m, I hadn't thought of Ben," she replied, and then proceeded to tick off a list of things which he'd have to do before there would be any wedding bells – join the church, quit playing poker, sign the pledge, shave every day and so on. Ollie dutifully made his report to Ben, who nodded a little sourly about some of the requirements but indicated that he could accept them until Ollie named the last one – that Ben would have to give up chewing tobacco.

"No sir, Ollie, I won't do that for any woman," he retorted. "Why, she's just downright unreasonable!"

Ben's broken heart was evidently mended, for a few years later he married Captain J. B. White's secretary, who apparently did not protest his devotion to Star cut plug, or at least made no effective protest. However, Bertie remained unmarried to the end of her days.

* * *

The great tragedy in the lives of Will P. and Estelle Fisher was the death by spinal meningitis of their son, William Peter, Jr., who was usually called Patsy, at the age of fourteen months in *1903*. They never ceased to mourn the loss of this little boy. Although their home was in Missoula only about five years, the parents chose to be buried beside the baby they were never able to forget.

* * *

Euphemia's ancestry was pure Irish, as far as anyone knows, but she would have no truck with those who favored separation from the British Empire. Once George Warren was given a flag of the Irish republic during a period of civil war on the Emerald Isle. He took it proudly to his grandmother, but she upbraided him severely and ordered him out of the house and to "take that rag along and never let me see it again."

There must have been a well marked trail early this century from Missouri to Puget Sound, as a considerable number of persons who were associated with the Fishers in the Show-Me state turned up years later in or near Seattle. One of the many was J. M. Marrow, who ran a general store at Birch Tree in the late *1890*'s before he succeeded Captain Meeker as the Cordz-Fisher bookkeeper. After Cordz-Fisher was dissolved, Jim Marrow worked elsewhere, but some years later he began a long association with Fisher Flouring Mills Company in which he reached the post of treasurer.

Another was Chester Perry, who was once a clerk at the Pine Hollow camp store near Birch Tree. Later he worked at the Golden Rule Stores in Bozeman, Red Lodge and Great Falls; and then after some years he was the accountant at Marina Mart, Inc. After he retired, he became caretaker of the Marina Mart Building and Moorings on Lake Union, keeping books and looking after things there for the Fisher-White-Henry Company.

* * *

By a strange coincidence, three old friends – O. W. Fisher, J. B. Barnett and H. H. Smalley – died within a period of eight days in *1922*. O. W. passed away on June *22*, the judge on June *28* and Smalley on June *30*. Almost forty years earlier, the three had been associated in the firm of Fisher, Barnett and Smalley at Humansville, where they operated a bridge timber and railroad tie business which supplied the necessary material for a branch line being built in a nearby area. Judge Barnett lived in Long Beach after *1915*, and

Smalley went there later, and the three old friends had spent a great deal of time together during the winter of *1921-22*. Not only did the trio pass away within a few days of each other, the Grim Reaper took them in the order in which their names appeared in the partnership name.

❧

Wallace recalls that in *1908* he was stopped on Puyallup Avenue in Tacoma by an officer, who said severely, "Young man, you were doing eighteen miles per hour. The speed limit here is twelve. If you hadn't been driving carefully, I'd run you in." It was almost exactly fifty years later before he had another encounter with a traffic cop, this time on Mercer Island. However, on this occasion, he was doing a good bit more than eighteen.

❧

When family councils were held on business matters, as they frequently were, O. W. had little to say as a rule. His sons were not always as reticent, and they often discussed things at considerable length. It happened now and then that O. W. would interject, "Hun-h" in a rising inflection which reached a crescendo in something suspiciously like a snort, and then leave the room. In its mildest form, this ejaculation denoted skepticism, but at times it was intended to convey severe disapproval. In any event, the one who was talking at the time of the clarion sound generally made haste to take another look at the line of argument which had generated the paternal comment.

* * *

The Christmas holidays of *1913* found the Fishers widely scattered. O. W. and Euphemia were in Honolulu attending the Shrine convention. Will P. and O. D. and their families were in Seattle. Burr and his family were in San Francisco. The Warrens were in Louisiana. The Dan Fishers were in Bozeman. Wallace was on the ocean en route to Bermuda. It was an unusual situation, because as a rule they were together for the holiday season.

* * *

At the time he bought into Cordz-Fisher, O. W. came home to announce that he had mortgaged all his property that day to raise fifty thousand dollars.

Euphemia was aghast at the amount. "Land sakes, pa," she exclaimed, "That will send us all to the poorhouse!"

Replied O. W., in high good humor, "Well, ma, we ain't never been there yet."

* * *

Burr was sufficiently good with the cornet that once in St. Louis he played a cornet solo with the band of John Philip Sousa, and he was invited to join up with that famous organization. The elated young man rushed off to talk to his father about the offer, but O. W. was pretty brusque. Said he, "Son, you'll have to make up your mind whether you're going to be a man or a musician!"

❦

O. W. teased Euphemia a great deal about her short stature. His favorite means of contrasting his height with hers – he was fourteen inches taller – was to stand beside her with one arm extended horizontally, and she would walk underneath without stooping and without touching his arm.

❦

Annis Judd Eals was a Missouri girl who was an office worker for the Four L for some years. She left Louisiana in *1914* because of a romance broken up by a difference in religion, and she accompanied the Warrens to Seattle. For more than forty years thereafter, she kept the personal books of the Fisher family, working until she was a year or more past eighty. She passed away in *1958* at eighty-three. Miss Eals lived with Lula Warren as a member of the household for thirty-five years, beginning soon after Willard's death in *1921*. Despite the long and close friendship, they were "Mrs. Warren" and "Miss Eals" to each other throughout this long period of time.

❦

Euphemia Fisher is said never to have signed a check. When O. W. was home, he paid the bills; when he was away, Lula or Wallace wrote the checks. Once, en route home from visiting Grandfather Robinson in Ontario, Euphemia decided to do some shopping in Toronto and she told Lula to cash a check. When the bank clerk asked for identification, Lula said, "This picture on the draft is my little brother Wallace, who is right here with me. Our father is president of the bank on which the draft is drawn." She got the money.

❧

In *1907*, two sixteen-year-old boys in Bozeman named Wallace Fisher and Walter Wilson formed a partnership called Fisher and Wilson, Electricians. They did all kinds of minor wiring jobs, such as doorbells, lights and telephones, and were well enough established so that they bought their supplies wholesale. The business continued several years. Both boys went on to take engineering courses at Montana State College. Wilson spent most of his career with Westinghouse, and for years before his retirement was Phoenix manager for that company.

❧

O. D. Fisher was one of the half dozen most prominent men in flour milling industry affairs nationally for more than a third of a century, beginning with the World War I era, although the company he headed was in the second echelon in size among milling companies in the United States. He was the first Pacific Coast miller to be elected to the presidency of the Millers' National Federation, the national trade association of the industry, holding the office in *1937-38* and refusing a second term because of the pressure of other affairs. He was a member of the board of directors of the Federation for a longer continuous period than any other person to date, serving from *1919* to *1948* and was on the executive committee for the last sixteen years of that time. He likewise served on most of the key committees of the Federation, particularly in the early New Deal days and in both the first and second world war periods. He was also a member of the official advisory committees of the War Food Administration and the War Production Board.

O. D. was the first president of the North Pacific Millers' Association, holding office from *1919* to *1921*. This association had ninety-one members at its first annual meeting, and it is an indication of the tremendous change that has taken place in flour milling that only three of them are still in business – Fisher's being one of the robust trio. He was the perennial representative of North Pacific milling interests in national councils of the industry.

When O. D. became president of the Federation, he visited all milling areas in the months before his inauguration. In the course of his travels at that time, he called on more than a hundred companies and attended many local meetings. This trip involved about fourteen thousand seven hundred miles of travel by automobile, Nellie being with him throughout the long journey.

* * *

Those who know the value of money only during the past two decades or so may be astonished at the announcement by

O. W. Fisher in the *Birch Tree Record* on July 21, 1899, that due to recent advances in lumber prices the wages of all Cordz-Fisher employes were being increased ten cents per day. They may also find amusement in the editorial in the same issue which said that the news had been received with rejoicing throughout the community and that the effect would be felt by merchants and others.

Members of the present generation can hardly grasp the fact that the action was really important and generous. Wage rates then were only a fraction of what they are now. The probability is that the action represented an increase of nearly fifteen per cent. The cost of things purchased was about equally low, and in a rural area like Birch Tree nearly everyone had a large garden, kept a couple of cows and a flock of chickens and some hogs, so that the degree of self-sufficiency was quite high. In those days, a dime was a consequential sum of money and even a penny had value. The average family did not command or possess very many dollars, but in terms of living most people were not suffering from the abject poverty that is suggested by the wage levels.

❧

O. D. Fisher was a horseshoe pitcher of some renown, and it was his habit for many years to spend part of the noon hour with plant employes on the horseshoe courts outside the mill. More recently, he has become a devotee of shuffleboard, and guests at his country place who succumb to invitations to try their skill often come off second best.

O. D. has a deadly eye for pitching quarters at a spot on the carpet, his skill having been developed through many years' practice and participation in the sport. Any novice who competes with him will soon find his supply of spare change exhausted.

* * *

Her sons believe that Lula Warren was absolutely without fear. One night during the depression years, she returned alone to her Belmont Place home. The porch was quite dark, but she suspected that a man was lurking there. She soon spied him, but instead of screaming she commanded, "You there in the corner, come out here! I said come out here at once!" The man sheepishly dropped a burglar's tool and stood meekly by while she handed out a severe tongue-lashing. She did not call the police, but characteristically she busied herself to find the man a job.

* * *

Lula employed an odd jobs man named Oscar, who was a great trial to her because of his fondness for J. Barleycorn. She would lecture him severely, he would promise to do better, but sooner or later he would backslide. On one occasion he disappeared when he was supposed to be working, and at that time Lula and a friend started for the San Juan Islands and were waiting for a boat at Mukilteo. They wanted some coffee and the only place available was a tavern, but the teetotaling ladies decided to brave it. Who should they find inside but Oscar, rather bedraggled but still able to sip beer?

"Oscar, what are you doing here?" demanded Lula in tones of authority, and the poor fellow looked as if he might sink through the floor. Courage returned in a few seconds, and then it was his turn to be inquisitor. Said he, "Mrs. Warren, just what are *you* doing in this kind of a place?"

* * *

George Warren recalls the excitement which the talk about the coming of Halley's comet made among the negroes at Fisher, Louisiana. A few days before the comet was due, his father bought a car but did not tell any of the mill force about it. It was probably the first car in the entire area. Willard drove it home at night, and when the headlights came in view and kept moving toward the town there was terror among the colored population – and many of them fled to the deepest recesses in the woods and refused to return to their homes for hours.

* * *

Dan Fisher was an athlete, and a sport in the best sense of that term. He played football at Wentworth Military Academy. He played baseball on town teams at several places in Montana, usually being the shortstop or third baseman but occasionally he also pitched. He gave up these activities in his Red Lodge days because they interfered with his duties as store manager. While still in his teens, Dan liked to drive fast horses. In Montana, he had a succession of fast cars, and in *1905* he drove in and won the first official automobile race ever held in that state. The course was five miles on a half-mile dirt track on the Bozeman fairgrounds, Dan driving a two-cylinder Rambler which was given a handicap of about a lap. In late years he had a succession of three Jaguars which he drove frequently from Seattle to Montana on a fantastic schedule. He also has had several planing-type speedboats for use on Puget Sound.

Oddly enough, Dan has never been in an airplane. He complains good-naturedly, "They go too fast!"

* * *

In Euphemia's Bible, it is recorded in her handwriting that Oliver David Fisher was born at Orleans, Missouri, on November *29, 1876*. However, the generally accepted date is one year earlier, and there is considerable evidence to support the belief that he was born on November *29, 1875*. First, the *1875* date checks out against the age he believes he was when he entered school and when he graduated from high school. Next, the records of Virginia Military Institute state that Cadet Fisher was fifteen when he matriculated in August *1891*. It also seems significant that his insurance policies carry the *1875* birth date, indicating that as long ago as the *1890*'s it was the accepted date. Most conclusive of all is a microfilm copy of the enumerator's report for Johnson Township, Polk County, Missouri, for the Census of *1880*, on file in the Missouri Historical Society building in Columbia; this document, dated June *12, 1880*, lists Oliver D. Fisher as being four years of age. Although it is difficult to reject a date written in a family Bible, no other evidence to support the *1876* date has been found. It will have to be concluded, therefore, that Euphemia made one mistake in an otherwise blameless life.

* * *

Had Carnegie medals for heroism been distributed in the *1880*'s, one would almost certainly have been awarded to Laura Gill, a Humansville girl who plunged into a pool into which a large spring discharged, to rescue Ollie Fisher, then a little fellow of five or six who could not swim. Laura undoubtedly saved his life. Ollie himself would have been a likely candidate for similar honors during his high school days. During a play rehearsal, one of the boys accidentally upset a table bearing a kerosene lamp, and the flames which arose caught the hair and dress of a girl named Kate Creasap. Ollie was the nearest to her, and he threw his coat over her and smothered the fire. Kate received only superficial burns, but in another half-minute would doubtless have been very severely injured. Many years later, Kate moved to a Seattle suburb and lived there the remainder of her life.

* * *

J. C. Penney and O. D. Fisher are approximately the same age – eighty-five – and they have an agreement to hold a joint celebration when they reach their centenary. The pact provides also that Joshua Green, Seattle banker, who is now past ninety-one, is to act as master of ceremonies for the occasion!

The Penney-Fisher acquaintance goes back to *1903*, when the future chain store magnate was managing the Golden Rule Store in Kemmerer, Wyoming, in which he owned a one-third interest. On the eastern buying trip that year, O. D. selected some of the goods which went to the Kemmerer store, doing so at the request of Penney's partners, Tom Callahan and Guy Johnson. Penney first "went to market" as a member of the Golden Rule Syndicate in the fall of 1903. That was also Dan Fisher's first buying trip in behalf of the Fisher stores. Dan recalls that the group made a side trip from New York to Washington and they managed somehow to be presented in a group to President Theodore Roosevelt.

J. C. Penney Company opened a big new store in Seattle a few years ago. As was his custom on such occasions, the founder stood in the doorway for the first hour or two to greet callers and spent the remainder of the day behind the counter as he served the trade. One of his first callers was O. D., who told the proprietor that he wanted to find out how the stock compared with that handled in the old Golden Rule Stores. After O. D. made the rounds, the following dialog took place;

"And how did you find the stock, O. D.?"

"About the same as in the Golden Rule Stores, J. C., only there's lots more of it."

"Yes, O. D., that's right – just more of it."

Penney may not be aware that another Penney-Fisher connection began in recent years, when his company made a long-term lease with Barnett and Ethlyn for the property occupied by the large Penney store in the university district in Seattle.

* * *

O. D. has a fervent belief in mental telepathy. One has but to mention the subject in his presence to touch off an hour's interesting discourse replete with experiences that cannot be dismissed as mere fancies, coincidences or whatnot. He is confident that in the future science will unlock the key to the field and discover the means whereby this means of communication may be employed.

* * *

O. D.'s memory is phenomenal, and he is able to recite statistics and facts by the yard about things which he follows closely, particularly the companies in which he is interested. A skeptic will often be confronted with data sheets which he pulls from pocket or brief case to prove the correctness of his statements. Even at eighty-five, his memory is far superior to that of most individuals of any age. He has had the faculty throughout his lifetime of absorbing salient facts and figures and then rarely forgetting them. Had he not been otherwise occupied, he might well have made a great success in the memory course business.

* * *

Honorary membership in the Millers' National Federation is reserved for those "who have rendered distinguished service to the industry". This award was voted in *1948* to O. D. When the award was voted, John Locke was the presiding officer and his announcement was that unfortunately Mr. Fisher is not present, but perhaps his daughter would like to respond in his behalf.

Said Irene: "Daddy will be very thrilled, and will ap-

. . . O. D. and Nellie Fisher on their golden wedding anniversary, December 10, 1946 . . .

preciate the honor, and I'd like to thank you for him."

Responded John: "Thank you, Irene. Your dad couldn't have said it better, and you were a heap shorter."

* * *

As in many family companies, problems sometimes arise in the Fisher organizations regarding placement of younger members who wish to go to work – and regarding their supervision. Years ago there were a few instances when jobs were made for them, and they usually reported to their relatives. This has been systematized and formalized into a policy, the substance of which is that a young Fisher or in-law may be accepted for any vacant or new job that is available, but when he goes to work he reports only to his superior and not to any family member.

An interesting sidelight on this policy is furnished by the experience of two in-laws who in the course of time ceased to be in-laws because of divorces. Because their work had been eminently satisfactory, they were urged by superiors to remain. Not only that, but their relations with former in-laws are cordial and friendly.

* * *

On O. W.'s visits to Seattle before his home was built, he usually stayed at O. D.'s house. His pet diversion was to play "High, low, jack and the game" with Nellie all evening long. In his own home, Euphemia sniffed a bit over his card-playing but finally acceded to this amusement although she refused to participate.

On one of O. W.'s visits, he went to the hospital for an operation but became quite disgruntled over the food there. Each day thereafter, Nellie prepared his food at home and took it to the hospital herself. This was typical of Nellie, whose life has been devoted chiefly to the comfort of her family.

* * *

Wallace was the only member of the second generation of Fishers to be a college graduate. O. D. and Lula attended college but did not graduate.

Eleven of the sixteen grandchildren of the O. W. Fishers were college or university graduates, and two others attended for a time. Ten of the eleven were graduates of the University of Washington – David, Julia, Ken, Peter, George, the three Warrens, Susanne and Jean. The one who holds a degree from another institution is Juanita, from Smith. Ken was awarded a master's degree by Harvard.

At this writing, sixteen members of the fourth Fisher generation have university or college degrees, and although there is more diversity in schools as compared with their parents the strong preference for the University of Washington continues. Nine of them are graduates of the Seattle institution, and the others are divided among Yale, Kansas State, Oregon State, Dartmouth, Stanford and Oregon. Several of them have taken advanced work also.

* * *

Methodist traditions and training prevailed in the first and second Fisher generations, and all members were identified with that church except Burr, who became a Baptist. Due largely but not entirely to the influence of in-laws, subsequent generations are no longer solidly Methodist. Several families are now Episcopal and others are Congregationalist and Catholic, although the church founded by John Wesley still commands the allegiance of more than does any other.

THE END

THE AUTHOR

To write in *1961 the history of a man who died in 1922, at the age of eighty, and of his family through several generations, obviously required some very special talent. It also called for a writer able to absorb the spirit of the area in which the family has lived and worked, and to absorb an understanding and intimate knowledge of the family over a period of many years. This combination of skill, background, and family acquaintanceship made possible the writing and publishing of this book.*

Herman Steen, the author, for some twenty-nine years served as Executive Secretary of the Millers' National Federation. He graduated as a major in agricultural journalism from Iowa State University, and before his association with the Federation was occupied with editing and writing.

Several members of the Fisher family being active in Federation work came into close contact with Mr. Steen. Over a long period of time the author has had the opportunity to observe the family through the eyes of their employes and competitors as well as his own.

From time to time friends have suggested the Fisher story be written, and so the family felt fortunate indeed to find Mr. Steen available with time and inclination to write this book.

Months of traveling and research were required, following the route of O. W. Fisher's migrations, delving into scattered records, visiting in all parts of the United States, talking with acquaintances, friends, and members of the Fisher family. It has been a time-consuming task, for Mr. Steen, and the family is truly appreciative of his effort and friendly treatment.

Notes

Chapter II O. W. FISHER: ANCESTRY AND YOUTH

1) By this was meant the construction of highways, canals and railroads.

2) There was a Fisher hotel in Dunkeld as late as *1920*.

3) He was often referred to as Oliver William Fisher, but that was incorrect. His middle name was Williams.

4) It is probable that these boys, ranging in age from eight to twelve, may have worked for a total wage of not more than two or three dollars per week — indeed, it could have been less.

5) Much of the data about O. W.'s career from *1850* to *1875* are derived from a book of sketches about leading figures in the lumber industry, published in *1906* by *The American Lumberman*. See comment in Chapter XIII.

6) The data on O. W. Fisher's army service are taken from the records of the Thirty-Ninth Ohio in the National Archives. The summary of the battles in which he fought is based upon accounts in several standard histories of the Civil War.

7) Chickamauga.

8) The date is variously given in the regimental records as December *18*, *21* and *22*, but December *18* is most likely correct.

Chapter III THE ROLLING STONE ADAGE DISPROVED

[1] Picture on page *28*.

[2] See Chapter XIII relative to controversy over O. D. Fisher's birth date.

[3] The rise and fall of population in rural areas is illustrated strikingly by Polk County. It had twelve thousand four hundred people in *1870*. This rose to a crest of twenty-three thousand two hundred and fifty-five by *1900*. Thereafter it fell to thirteen thousand one hundred and four in *1960*. Had it not been for the growth of Bolivar, the percentage loss would have been much greater.

[4] *History of Hickory, Polk, Cedar, Dade and Barton Counties*, (*1889*).

[5] When O. D. Fisher visited Polk County in *1937*, even the old settlers did not remember the site of Orleans. It was found only by inquiring for the Orleans bridge. The foundations of some of the buildings were still there at that time.

[6] Named for James Human, who settled in the community in *1834*.

[7] Merchant mill was a once common term in the flour milling industry. It referred to a mill large enough to produce flour for sale, whereas a grist mill usually made flour only for those who brought wheat to the mill.

[8] Picture on page *44*.

Chapter IV AFFLUENCE DESPITE HARD TIMES

[1] This figure more than doubled in the next twenty years, rose to a peak of one thousand twenty-two in *1930* but has since declined below eight hundred.

[2] A county judge in Missouri is an administrative official who has no judicial duties.

[3] He was not a lawyer, but in those days Missouri did not require probate judges to have legal training.

[4] No kin to O. W. Fisher.

[5] Commuting from Humansville to Birch Tree was neither simple nor speedy. The distance was more than one hundred fifty miles, there was a layover in Willow Springs, and the service was by branch line trains and even on freight trains.

[6] At that time, as there were so many unaccredited high schools, nearly all the state universities had preparatory schools or academies.

[7] The Penney merchandizing empire had its inception in these Golden Rule Stores. After J. C. Penney went broke running a butcher shop at Longmont, Colorado, at the beginning of this century, he became a clerk for Tom Callahan. In *1902*, he was a partner with Callahan and Johnson in the Golden Rule Store at Kemmerer, Wyoming, where he was the manager. He purchased the stores at Kemmerer and Rock Springs in *1907* from his partners, and later the J. C. Penney Company acquired nearly all of the other stores which had been operated by the Humansville boys.

[8] The site of this home is now occupied by the Shrine Temple.

Chapter V THE SPRINGFIELD YEARS

1) It is a commentary upon the times that White's salary as manager of the lumber sales agency was twelve hundred dollars per year.

2) *Kansas City Journal,* January 6, 1923.

3) J. B. White's youngest son, Raymond B. White, is now one of the distinguished senior citizens of Kansas City after a lifetime in the lumber business.

4) The Louisiana Long Leaf Lumber Company is commonly called the Four L, and will be so referred to herein.

5) O. W.'s salary as general manager was one thousand dollars per year.

6) Family tradition is that Willard never smoked another cigaret, although he smoked cigars and a pipe.

7) *St. Louis Globe-Democrat,* February 9, 1900.

8) J. C. Penney first went to market in 1903 as a syndicate member. He was associated with Tom Callahan at the time.

9) It is interesting to note that the *Birch Tree Record* said on December 16, 1898 that the south tract had enough timber to last the sawmill for twenty years.

Chapter VI THE FISHERS IN MONTANA

1) The aftermath of the coast trip is discussed at length in Chapter VII.

2) It is probable that Will P. Fisher was the first man to offer Montana-milled flour to the Puget Sound trade.

3) Generally speaking, soft wheat flours are most suitable for making crackers, pastry and cakes; and hard wheat flours for yeast breads.

4) Gallatin Valley Milling Company was owned outright by the Fishers. Fisher Flouring Mills Company had a number of stockholders outside the family. The effect of a consolidation was obtained through the issuance of an inseparable stock certificate. This ingenious device is described in Chapter XII.

Chapter VII THE TIDE TAKEN AT FLOOD[1]

1) The events related in Chapter VII took place in substantially the same years as those discussed in the preceding chapter; but are treated separately because the subject matter is basically different.

2) William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar,* Act. IV, Scene 3.

3) The options were all taken in the name of O. D. Fisher, Trustee.

4) Ollie and his father learned about the Snoqualmie tract on their 1903 trip.

5) Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company had one individual stockholder: Willard Warren, the company manager. His successors, Roderick Titcomb and Charles H. Ingram, also became stockholders in turn.

6) The agreement to merge properties was made in 1912, but the incorporation of Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company took place in 1914.

Chapter VIII EARLY SEATTLE YEARS

[1] It is a curious fact that this great feat is not commemorated by any structure in the entire state.

[2] Not to be confused with J. B. White, with whom the Fishers were associated in many enterprises. They were not kin.

[3] H. C. Henry was the father of Langdon C. Henry, well-known citizen of Seattle and a director of Fisher Flouring Mills Company for many years.

Chapter IX LAST YEARS OF THE FOUNDERS

[1] Many milling and grain companies throughout the United States took terrific losses on their inventories during the collapse of farm product prices which began in late *1920*; the writer recalls Herbert Hoover's statement to the baking industry in October *1920* that the world wheat situation was such that sensationally higher prices could be expected, and it set off a great wave of flour buying. Many bakers who rushed into the market at that juncture would have saved from five to eight dollars per barrel by delaying only a short time. This is an illustration of the errors in judging the future which were common at that time.

Chapter X THE SECOND GENERATION

[1] Jennie survived him more than twenty-four years, passing away on October *15, 1948*.

[2] The O. W. Fisher Company remained intact until *1956*, when one-sixth of each security owned was transferred to the heirs of Lula Warren.

[3] This incident is related in detail in Chapter XII.

[4] No kin to the O. W. Fisher family.

[5] This was one of the most popular indoor sports of the middle and late *1920*'s.

[6] The Fisher radio and television activities are related in Chapter XII.

[7] The White-Dulany Company was organized in *1910* as a wheat-buying agency. Later a line of country grain warehouses was acquired. Still later it purchased real estate in Seattle and elsewhere, and it also has a securities portfolio. It is a holding, not an operating company.

Chapter XI THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATIONS

[1] Nearly all of these debts had been paid off by *1940*.

[2] Glen's war service is discussed in Chapter XIII.

[3] Kansas State is the only university which offers a flour milling technology course.

Chapter XII THE FISHERS IN BUSINESS

LUMBERING

1) The Ozarks are commonly called mountains in Missouri, but geologists agree that this nomenclature is incorrect and that the area is actually a plateau which in prehistoric times was a sea floor. The plateau averages about one thousand feet elevation, and its highest point is only one thousand, seven hundred and seventy-two feet, but it is characterized by steep, tree-covered hills and very thin soil. The rough terrain results from the fact that the plateau is several hundred feet higher than the rivers which drain it, and deep canyons have been formed. The Ozark plateau, comprises about one-third of Missouri and parts of adjoining states. Draw a line from St. Louis to the southwestern corner of the state, put a big hump on the middle of the line, and the Ozarks comprise nearly all the region below the line except the bottom lands along the Mississippi River.

BANKING

2) Dexter Horton was the name of a Seattle pioneer merchant who also founded the city's first bank in *1870*.

FLOUR MILLING

3) A barrel of flour is one hundred ninety-six pounds, or fourteen English "stone" of fourteen pounds each. This unit of measure was abandoned in *1943*, and since then mills are rated in terms of hundred weights.

4) Prior to his Fisher association, Stanley Allen was an employe of Sperry Flour Company of San Francisco, having charge of its Far East Department from *1901* to *1910* and living in Hong Kong during that time.

GENEALOGY

……

Oliver Williams Fisher born—9-22-1842, Wheelersburg, Ohio died—6-22-1922, Seattle, Washington	married 7-11-67 Delaware, Ontario	Euphemia Robinson born—12-1-1846, Komoka, Ontario died—3-2-1921, Seattle, Washington

……

Oliver Williams Fisher

William Peter Fisher born—6-5-69, near Louisville, Kentucky died—5-11-38, Seattle, Washington	married 9-17-91 Birch Tree, Missouri	Estelle Meeker born—2-9-73, Garnett, Kansas died—1-29-58, Seattle, Washington
Burr Fisher born—2-7-72, Orleans, Missouri died—9-16-24, Seattle, Washington	married 2-8-93 Humansville, Missouri	Jennie Lee Barnett born—3-3-74, Humansville, Missouri died—10-15-48, Seattle, Washington
Oliver David Fisher born—11-29-75, Orleans, Missouri	married 12-10-96 Cape Girardeau, Missouri	Nellie Evelyn Hughes born—5-27-77, Irondale, Missouri
Daniel Robinson Fisher born—7-6-78, Humansville, Missouri	married 6-23-08 Bozeman, Montana	May Beatrice Bennett born—2-19-87, Walkerville, Montana died—7-3-59, Seattle, Washington
Lula Christina Fisher born—1-18-81, Humansville, Missouri died—8-2-56, Seattle, Washington	married 1-27-04 Springfield, Missouri	William Willard Warren born—5-11-76, Lincoln, Illinois died—4-11-21, Seattle, Washington
Zoe Edith Fisher born—5-18-84, Humansville, Missouri died—8-8-84, Humansville, Missouri		
Orin Wallace Fisher born—1-8-91, Humansville, Missouri	married 6-28-16 Seattle, Washington	Vivien Swalwell born—8-30-91, Tacoma, Washington

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. . . .

William Peter Fisher

David Meeker Fisher born—9-22-92, Birch Tree, Missouri died—8-23-58, Acapulco, Mexico	married 7-19-19 San Francisco, California	Dorothy Jones born—11-10-97, Fort Thomas, Kentucky
Ben Herr Fisher born—1-21-95, Boulder, Colorado died—10-10-40, Seattle, Washington	married 12-20-20 Seattle, Washington	Florence Elizabeth d'Evers born—10-30-94, Chicago, Illinois
Julia Euphemia Fisher born—2-3-97, Boulder, Colorado	married 12-20-24 Hong Kong, China	Maxwell McGaughey Hamilton born—12-20-96, Tahlequah, Oklahoma died—11-11-57, Palo Alto, California
William Peter Fisher, Jr. born—1-16-02, Missoula, Montana died—3-21-03, Missoula, Montana		
Kenneth Robinson Fisher born—12-12-06, Seattle, Washington	married 10-29-30 Seattle, Washington	Margarett Olivia Lewis born—1-22-08, Peoria, Illinois
Peter Fisher born—1-23-20, Seattle, Washington	married 12-20-41 Bay City, Michigan	Shirley Rhoads born—12-22-20, Detroit, Michigan

. . . .

Burr Fisher

Barnett Fisher born—11-7-96, Missoula, Montana	married 11-8-19 San Francisco, California	Ethlyn Gaige-Nordine born—4-17-98, Alameda, California
Jack Fisher born 2-11-05, Bozeman, Montana died—4-27-45, Seattle, Washington	married 8-25-30 Seattle, Washington	Bonnie Elsie Spence born—11-28-09, Espanola, Ontario

. . . .

Oliver David Fisher

Zoe Juanita Fisher born -9-15-97, Birch Tree, Missouri	married 9-2-19 Seattle, Washington	Donald Goodnow Graham born—12-9-94, Fort Worth, Texas
Irene Vivian Fisher born--4-5-01, Birch Tree, Missouri	married 9-21-20 Seattle, Washington	John Loor Locke born—6-1-96, Cambridge, Ohio

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……

Daniel Robinson Fisher

Daniel Robinson Fisher, Jr. born—2-9-11, Bozeman, Montana died—10-2-21, Spokane, Washington		
Bennett Irvine Fisher born—6-19-13, Bozeman, Montana	married 6-4-57 Papeete, Tahiti	Gisele Cowan born—5-20-24, Papeete, Tahiti
George Oliver Fisher born—5-5-18, Great Falls, Montana	married 12-24-41 Vancouver, Washington	Allie Gayle Parmenter born—10-20-18, Lawrence, Kansas

……

Lula Christina Fisher Warren

George Fisher Warren born—4-11-06, Fisher, Louisiana	married 1-3-31 Seattle, Washington	Elizabeth Dent born—8-16-09, Spokane, Washington
William Willard Warren, Jr. born—8-22-11, Fisher, Louisiana	married 4-19-47 Bellingham, Washington	Mary Elizabeth Douglas born—2-17-22, Seattle, Washington
John Oliver Warren born—4-25-16, Seattle, Washington	married 11-20-42 Seattle, Washington	Jeannette Jahn born—9-8-20, Seattle, Washington

……

Orin Wallace Fisher

Suzanne Fisher born—4-19-20, Seattle, Washington	married 2-26-43 Seattle, Washington	William John Hubbach, Jr. born—2-15-18, Nenana, Alaska
Jean Elizabeth Fisher born—10-15-22, Seattle, Washington	married 2-6-45 Seattle, Washington	Peter James McTavish born—5-29-19, Calgary, Alberta

……

David Meeker Fisher

Sarah Dorothy Fisher born—3-14-21, Snoqualmie Falls, Wash.	married 6-27-43 Carmel, California	Donald Miller Sellars born—8-11-14, Worcester, Massachusetts
David Meeker Fisher, Jr. born—6-28-24, Snoqualmie Falls, Wash.	married 10-21-50 Kirkland, Washington	Irene Sina Brudie born—8-19-26, Seattle, Washington

……

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Ben Herr Fisher

Glen William Fisher born—10-15-23, Great Falls, Montana	married 9-8-47 Billings, Montana	Muriel Elizabeth Miller born—11-17-27, Minot, North Dakota
Marion Alice Fisher born—1-25-26, Great Falls, Montana	married 9-4-46 Missoula, Montana	Jay Riddock Overman born—12-26-16, Helena, Ontario

……

Julia Euphemia Fisher Hamilton

Julia Frances Hamilton born—9-18-26, Shanghai, China	married 2-7-48 Seattle, Washington	Charles Eugene Church born—8-14-21, Portland, Oregon

……

Kenneth Robinson Fisher

Phelps Kenneth Fisher born—9-3-34, Seattle, Washington	married 9-30-60 Seattle, Washington	Christel Mathilde Dorothea Laes born—12-26-31, Itzhoe-Schleswig-Holstein, Germany
Ann Estelle Fisher born—4-8-43, Seattle, Washington		

……

Peter Fisher

Michael Jeffry Fisher
born—3-13-43, Hollywood, California

Cristina Diane Fisher
born—6-1-44, Hollywood, California

Deborah Jan Fisher
born—3-8-49, Spokane, Washington

Bruce Peter Fisher
born—8-26-54, Ellensburg, Washington

Julie Elizabeth Fisher
born—10-27-55, Ellensburg, Washington

……

. . . .

Barnett Fisher

Jacklyn Lee Fisher born—12-8-21, Seattle, Washington	married 1-9-45 Seattle, Washington	Carl Richard Meurk born—2-13-20, Mobile, Alabama
Elaine Gaige Fisher born—4-3-24, Seattle, Washington	married 6-24-60 Seattle, Washington	C. Willis Thurman born—1-24-14, Portland, Oregon

. . . .

Jack Fisher

Jenee Madill Fisher born—6-9-31, Seattle, Washington	married 4-24-59 Seattle, Washington	Mario Rabinowitz born—10-24-36, Mexico City
Deborah Lou Fisher born—6-9-35, Seattle, Washington		

. . . .

Zoe Juanita Fisher Graham

Richard Fisher Graham born—5-26-20, Cambridge, Massachusetts	married 8-29-43 Huntsville, Alabama	Frances Parks born—3-4-23, Godsden, Alabama
Donald Goodnow Graham, Jr. born—5-19-23, Seattle, Washington	married 3-16-51 Seattle, Washington	Felicia Anhalt born—7-29-27, Seattle, Washington

. . . .

Irene Vivian Fisher Locke

Margaret Ann (Peggy) Locke born—9-20-23, Seattle, Washington	married 9-6-56 Seattle, Washington	Virgil Ivan Newman born—8-15-14, Red Lodge, Montana
John Loor Locke, Jr. born—5-9-25, Seattle, Washington		
Evelyn Thorn Locke born—1-22-30, Seattle, Washington	married 1-5-51 Seattle, Washington	Ralph Francis Dreitzler, Jr. born—1-8-28, Creosote, Washington

. . . .

Bennett Irvine Fisher

Bennett Irvine Fisher, II born—6-23-40, Seattle, Washington		

. . . .

George Oliver Fisher

George Daniel Fisher
born—3-16-49, Bozeman, Montana

William Oliver Fisher
born—7-25-50, Bozeman, Montana

George Fisher Warren

Elizabeth Louella Warren
born—12-31-31, Seattle, Washington

married
12-27-53
Seattle, Washington

Vernon Russell Anderson
born—7-31-31, San Francisco, California

George Fisher Warren, Jr.
born—10-10-34, Seattle, Washington

William Willard Warren, Jr.

William Willard Warren, III
born—11-7-38, Seattle, Washington

Douglas David Warren
born—10-25-48, Seattle, Washington

Keith Scott Warren
born—4-20-50, Seattle, Washington

Mary Christina Warren
born—5-3-53, Seattle, Washington

John Oliver Warren

Wendy Jean Warren
born—5-24-46, Seattle, Washington

John Oliver Warren, Jr.
born—11-12-48, Seattle, Washington

Robert Bruce Warren
born—6-16-51, Seattle, Washington

Judith Ann Warren
born—12-7-57, Honolulu, Hawaii

. . . .

Suzanne Fisher Hubbach

Carol Jean Hubbach
born—1-1-45, Seattle, Washington

John Wallace Hubbach
born—1-15-47, Seattle, Washington

. . . .

Jean Elizabeth Fisher McTavish

Marilyn Jean McTavish
born—9-26-46, Seattle, Washington

Peter Douglas McTavish
born—3-2-48, Seattle, Washington

Robert Fisher McTavish
born—7-15-49, Seattle, Washington

Bruce James McTavish
born—7-1-55, Seattle, Washington

. . . .

Sarah Dorothy Fisher Sellars

Susan Crampton Sellars
born—11-11-44, Snoqualmie Falls, Wash.

Donald Miller Sellars, Jr.
born—10-7-46, Snoqualmie Falls, Wash.

Ward McKinstry Sellars
born—9-15-49, Snoqualmie Falls, Wash.

Elizabeth Ruth Sellars
born—7-28-51, Kirkland, Washington

Paula Mary Sellars
born—2-28-56, Yakima, Washington

Ann Louise Sellars
born—7-22-57, Yakima, Washington

John Fisher Sellars
born—12-31-59, Seattle, Washington

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. . . .

David Meeker Fisher, Jr.

David Brudie Fisher
born—4-11-52, Seattle, Washington

Erik Ward Fisher
born—9-28-55, Warren, Arkansas

Peter Crampton Fisher
born—5-30-57, Warren, Arkansas

. . . .

Glen William Fisher

Susan Elizabeth Fisher
born—3-13-52, Seattle, Washington

Darcy d'Evers Fisher
born—6-22-55, Seattle, Washington

Joan Ellen Fisher
born—9-1-57, Seattle, Washington

Tamara Ann Fisher
born—7-23-60, Seattle, Washington

. . . .

Marion Alice Fisher Overman

Clyde Allen Overman
born—1-23-50, Great Falls, Montana

Benny Lee Overman
born—6-16-53, Great Falls, Montana

. . . .

Julia Frances Hamilton Church

Marian Estelle Church
born—3-23-49, Roseburg, Oregon

Stevan Maxwell Church
born—5-26-51, Roseburg, Oregon

Tracy Elizabeth Church
born—4-5-54, Roseburg, Oregon

Thomas Clay Church
born—9-13-57, Roseburg, Oregon

. . . .

. . . .

Jacklyn Lee Fisher Meurk

Richard Barnett Meurk
born—1-30-47, San Francisco, California

Lynda Louise Meurk
born—6-17-50, San Francisco, California

Lawrence Eric Meurk
born—7-29-53, Berkeley, California

. . . .

Elaine Gaige Fisher (Ashworth) Thurman

Mark Warren Ashworth
born—9-9-49, Seattle, Washington

Scot Randall Ashworth
born—5-23-53, Seattle, Washington

. . . .

Jenee Madill Fisher Rabinowitz

Daniel Laib Rabinowitz
born—11-25-59, Seattle, Washington

Benjamin Manya Rabinowitz
born—4-10-61, Seattle, Washington

. . . .

Richard Fisher Graham

Sharon Lorraine Graham
born—4-14-45, Oak Ridge, Tennessee

. . . .

Donald Goodnow Graham, Jr.

Donald Goodnow, III
born—9-4-54, Seattle, Washington

Frederick Anhalt Graham
born—1-20-57, Seattle, Washington

. . . .

Peggy Locke (Erzinger) Newman

Robin Janene Erzinger
born—7-17-45, Seattle, Washington

. . . .

Evelyn Thorn Locke Dreitzler

Evelyn Irene Dreitzler
born—10-3-51, Seattle, Washington

Ralph Francis Dreitzler, III
born—12-11-53, Seattle, Washington

. . . .

Elizabeth Louella Warren Anderson

Brenton Warren Anderson
born—7-30-57, Palo Alto, California

Lysanna Anderson
born—12-2-58, Palo Alto, California

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Index

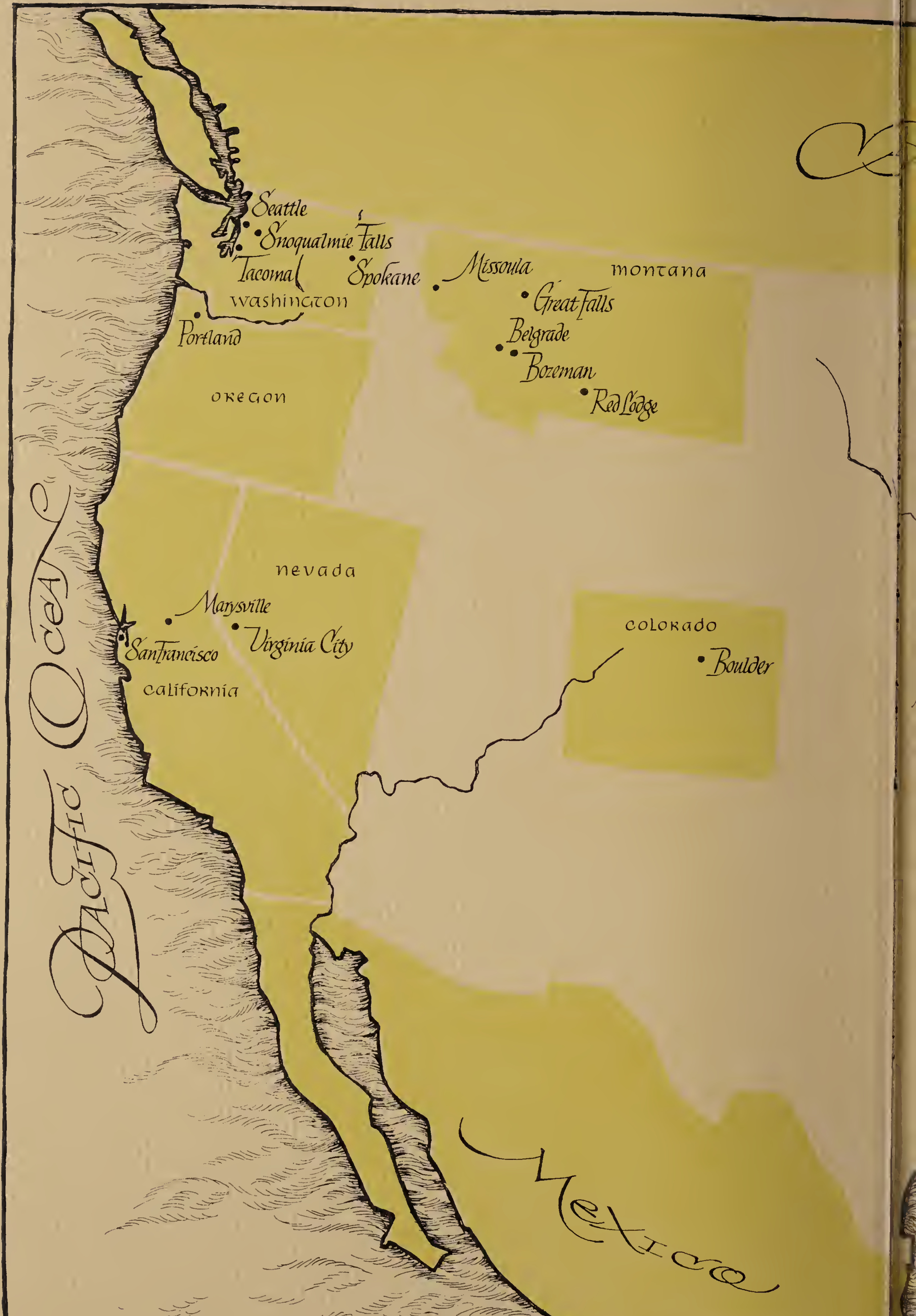
Allen, W. Stanley • 107, 114, 177, 224
Anderson, Elizabeth Warren • 154
Anderson, Vernon • 154
Arnold, Lawrence M. • 169, 180
Arnold, Morris A. • 97, 134, 135 168, 174
Ashworth, Don B. • 149, 156
Banking • 37-39, 43, 77, 97, 112, 133-135, 143, 158, 168, 169, 195
Barnett, J. B. • 37-40, 42, 45, 49, 59, 101, 115, 160-162, 174, 195, 198, 200, 202
Barnett & Paxton • 34, 48, 50
Belgrade, Montana • 71, 72, 76, 82, 83, 100, 108, 109, 143, 153, 172, 196
Bellingham, Washington • 114
Bell, Laird • 166
Birch Tree, Missouri • 41-43, 47, 50, 51, 55, 60, 62, 63, 65, 67, 72, 97, 142, 150, 151, 161, 168, 197, 202, 208
Bolivar, Missouri • 33-35, 38, 194, 221
Boulder, Colorado • 49, 62, 67, 70, 119, 127, 142, 143, 145
Bozeman, Montana • 71, 72, 76, 82, 83, 100, 108, 109, 143, 153, 172, 196
British Columbia • 82
Bryan, William Jennings • 198
Bulgor • 178
California • 16, 26, 82, 83, 101, 106, 113, 121, 127, 154, 175
Callahan, Thomas M. • 49-51,162, 213, 221, 222
Campbell, Willis L. • 184
Cape Girardeau, Missouri • 62
Chambers-Fisher Company • 76, 100
Choteau, Montana • 119, 143,
Church activities • 45-47, 67, 119, 129, 137, 146, 218
Church, Charles • 146
Church, Julia Hamilton • 146
Cincinnati • 16, 17, 20
Clapp, Norton • 166
Colorado • 49, 50, 67, 197-199
Colorado, University of • 52
Connecticut • 18
Cordz Brothers • 41, 42, 59, 101, 160, 174, 187
Cordz-Fisher Lumber Company • 42, 43, 51, 55, 61-65, 74, 91, 160-162, 168, 200, 204, 208
Cordz, Henry . 42, 52, 60, 160-162, 187
Corinth, battle of • 21-23, 194
Cornell University • 76
Cox, Agnes • 43
Cox, Alice • 43, 48
Cox, Braxton • 33
Cox, Sarah Fisher • 19, 33, 43
Creasap, Kate • 212
Davis, E. W. • 166
Davis, J. S. • 135, 147, 176, 180
Dartmouth College • 151, 217
Delaware, Ontario • 29, 31
Denkmann, Frederick C. A. . 166
Dent, Hawthorne K. • 133, 181-184
Dimmitt, Charles E. . 50, 64
Dodge family • 18, 192, 193
Douglas, J. F. • 96
Dreitzler, Evelyn Locke • 152
Dreitzler, Ralph F., Jr. • 152
Drury College • 48, 67
Dulany, Dan • 59, 84, 85, 98
Dulany, George W. • 59, 84, 85, 173, 174
Dulany, George W., Jr. • 180
Dulany, William H. • 59, 84, 85
Dunks, William A. • 179
Eals, Annis Judd • 205
Ellensburg, Washington • 147, 199
Erzinger, Robert L. • 179
Erzinger, Robin • 152
Everett Timber & Investment Company . 85
Everett, Washington • 84-86, 108, 109, 167
Exchange Sawmill Sales Company • 55
First National Bank • 97, 123, 134, 168
Fisher, Alford • 19, 20, 193, 194
Fisher, Allie Parmenter • 153
Fisher, Andrew • 19, 20, 193
Fisher, Ann • 147
Fisher, Barnett • 7, 67, 109, 149, 150
Fisher, Barnett & Smalley • 40, 202
Fisher, Ben Herr • 67, 119, 143-145, 200

Fisher, Bennett Irvine • 7, 80, 153
Fisher, Bennett Irvine, 2nd • 153
Fisher, Birt • 133, 134, 185-189
Fisher, Bonnie Spence • 150
Fisher Broadcasting Company • 136, 155
Fisher, Bruce • 147
Fisher, Burr • 14, 32, 48, 49, 51, 56, 62-64, 67-71, 76, 80, 100-102, 107, 109, 113, 117, 120, 121, 123, 131, 132, 149, 150, 161, 174, 177, 180, 190, 204
Fisher, Christel Laes • 147, 148
Fisher, Cristina • 147
Fisher, Daniel • 19, 20, 32, 194
Fisher, Daniel Robinson • 14, 29, 34, 48, 52, 57, 62, 64, 70, 71, 75, 76, 80, 100, 109, 113, 117, 119, 123, 124, 127, 129, 137, 138, 153, 172, 204, 210
Fisher, Daniel Robinson, Jr. • 80, 127
Fisher, David Meeker • 51, 67, 74, 109, 119, 142, 143, 217
Fisher, David Meeker, Jr. • 135, 143
Fisher, Deborah • 147
Fisher, Dorothy Jones • 143, 144
Fisher, Estelle Meeker • 51, 67, 74, 75, 80, 109, 113, 119, 137, 147, 199-201, 206
Fisher, Ethlyn Gaige-Nordine • 149
Fisher, Euphemia Robinson • 7, 14, 28-36, 43-47, 49-55, 66-68, 73, 74, 76, 79, 80, 104, 105, 109-115, 127, 137, 140, 151, 193, 194, 196, 201, 204, 205, 211, 212
Fisher, Florence d'Evers • 144, 145
Fisher Flouring Mills Company • 72, 98-100, 106-108, 112-114, 119, 120, 123, 124, 131, 133-137, 144, 146, 147, 149, 151, 154, 155, 158, 172-181, 186
Fisher, George Oliver • 7, 113, 135, 217
Fisher, Giselle Cowan • 153
Fisher, Glen William • 135, 144
Fisher, Irene • see Locke, Irene Fisher
Fisher, Jack • 80, 150
Fisher, Jean Elizabeth • see McTavish, Jean Fisher
Fisher, Jennie Barnett • 51, 67, 80, 109, 123
Fisher, Joseph • 41, 42, 55
Fisher, Juanita • See Graham, Juanita Fisher
Fisher, Julia Euphemia • see Hamilton, Julia Fisher
Fisher, Julie • 147
Fisher, Kenneth Robinson • 7, 80, 146, 171, 178, 180, 190, 217
Fisher, Louisiana • 60, 67, 77, 80 154, 210
Fisher, Lucretia Dodge • 15-20
Fisher, Lula Christina • see Warren, Lula Fisher
Fisher, Margarett Lewis • 146
Fisher, May Bennett • 76, 80, 113, 153
Fisher Mercantile Company • 64, 76, 77, 100, 158
Fisher, Michael • 147
Fisher, Muriel • 144
Fisher, Nellie Hughes • 62, 63, 67, 72, 104, 113, 114, 127, 150, 207, 215, 216
Fisher, Oliver David • 14, 32, 48, 51, 52, 56, 62-65, 67, 71, 72, 75, 76, 82-87, 89-91, 93-98, 100, 101, 104, 106, 107, 112-114, 117-119, 121-123, 125, 127, 131-135, 137-139, 150, 151, 161, 164-174, 179, 180, 182, 184-187, 190, 193, 200, 204, 206-208, 211-215, 217, 221, 222
Fisher, Oliver Williams • 3, 7, 13-91, 95, 98, 100-106, 109-113, 115-117, 123, 131, 132, 137, 139-142, 146, 151, 154, 155, 158, 160-165, 172-174, 179, 192-199, 202-205, 208, 216, 217, 219-223
Fisher, O. W. Company • 131, 132, 135
Fisher, Peter • 15-20
Fisher, Peter • 7, 113, 135, 147, 199, 217
Fisher, Phelps • 147, 148, 191
Fisher, Sarah Jeanette • see Cox, Sarah Fisher
Fisher, Shirley Rhoads • 147
Fisher, Susanne • See Hubbach, Susanne Fisher
Fisher Trading Company • 75, 92, 100, 106, 107, 132
Fisher, Vivien Swalwell • 108, 113, 156
Fisher, Orin Wallace "O. W., Jr." • 14, 43, 48, 52, 54, 57, 67, 75, 76, 104, 108, 109, 113, 114, 117, 119, 128, 131, 134, 135, 137, 156, 172, 177, 180, 186, 189, 203, 204, 206
Fisher-White-Henry Company • 98, 100, 125, 134, 136, 154, 171, 202,
Fisher, William Peter • 14, 31, 47-51, 57, 62-64, 67, 70, 74-76, 80, 92, 100, 101, 104, 106, 107, 109, 113, 117-119, 121, 127, 132-135, 137, 142, 145-147, 174, 176, 198-201, 204, 222

Fisher's Blend Station, Inc. • see KOMO
Fisher's Television Company • see KOMO
Forest Lumber Company • 164
Forrest, General • 23
Four L Company • see Louisiana Long Leaf Lumber Company
Fuller, F. W. • 179
Gallatin Valley Milling Company • 72, 75, 76, 98, 100, 108, 109, 112, 119, 125, 129, 138, 153, 172, 173, 180, 202
General Insurance Company,
General America Corporation • 133, 134, 152, 156, 181-183
Gill, Laura • 212
Golden Rule Stores • 50, 62-66, 70, 76, 121, 123, 157, 195, 202, 212, 213, 221
Graham, Donald G. • 113, 135, 150, 151, 180, 190
Graham, Donald G., Jr. • 135, 151
Graham, Felicia Anhalt • 151
Graham, Frances Parks • 151
Graham, Juanita Fisher • 7, 67, 113, 150, 217
Graham, Richard Fisher • 113, 135, 151
G. A. R. • 46, 51, 197
Grandin-Coast Lumber Company • 77, 86-89, 91, 93, 95, 100, 104, 107, 123, 165, 166
Grandin, J. L., and E. B. • 58, 84-87, 96, 174
Grandin, Missouri • 41, 55, 58, 61, 163
Grant, General • 21, 22
Great Falls, Montana • 50, 70, 71, 76, 113, 119, 143, 144, 153, 202
Haley, William L. • 177
Hall, J. A. • 97, 174
Hall, William • 50, 195
Hamilton, Julia Fisher • 7, 67, 119, 145, 217
Hamilton, Maxwell M. • 145
Harvard University • 146, 150, 217
Hayes, Edmund • 166
Henry, Horace C. • 96, 223
Henry, L. C. • 180, 223
Herr, Ben • 161, 200
Holmes, W. Kirby • 179
Honolulu, Hawaii • 156, 204
Hubbach, Carol • 156
Hubbach, John • 156
Hubbach, Susanne Fisher • 7, 112, 156, 217
Hubbach, William J. • 156, 191
Hughes, Nellie • see Fisher, Nellie Hughes
Humansville, Missouri • 34-39, 43-50, 62, 64, 66, 115, 124, 126, 128, 194, 195, 197, 202, 212, 221
Idaho • 58, 82
Ingram, Charles H. • 166, 222
Irvine, E. L. • 179
Irvine, William H. • 107
Iuka, battle of • 22
Kansas • 41, 43, 55, 153
Kansas City • 32, 33, 58, 59, 84, 197, 221
Kansas State University • 144, 217
Kenton Station, Tennessee • 23
Kentucky • 17, 20, 22, 26, 31, 32, 38, 72, 196
Komoka, Ontario • 29, 31
KOMO • 133-137, 152, 153, 158, 179, 185-191
Laird, William H. • 167
Lingo, William M., Jr. • 180
Little, George R. • 166
Lobo, Ontario • 30
Locke, Irene Fisher • 7, 67, 114, 151, 214
Locke, John L. • 151, 152, 171, 179, 180, 190, 214
Locke, John L., Jr. • 152, 192
London, Ontario • 27, 29, 193
Long, George S. • 89, 90, 115, 182
Louisiana • 54, 58, 60-62, 67, 74, 87, 91, 100, 104, 107, 108, 112, 154, 162-164, 205, 210
Louisiana Central Lumber Company • 71, 164
Louisiana Central Gas & Oil Company • 164
Louisiana Long Leaf Lumber Company • 60, 61, 65, 67, 74, 90, 91, 107, 108, 112, 154, 162-164, 205, 210
Louisiana Sawmill Company • 164
Louisville, Kentucky • 31, 118
Lumbering • 20, 31-35, 40-43, 48, 51, 52, 55, 58-61, 65, 71, 72, 74, 75, 77, 81-91, 93-96, 100, 107, 108, 115, 123, 125, 133-136, 142, 143, 152, 154, 155, 158, 160-167
McCormick, W. L. • 166
McFarlane, A. J. • 179
McGraw, John H. • 97
McTavish, Bruce • 156
McTavish, Jean Fisher • 7, 112, 156, 217
McTavish, Marilyn • 156

McTavish, Peter • 156
McTavish, Peter, Jr. • 156
McTavish, Robert • 156
McVay, J. T. • 174
Manufacturers' Association of Washington • 119
Marysville, California • 27
Meeker, Edwin I. • 51, 202
Meeker, Estelle • see Fisher, Estelle Meeker
Metropolitan Building Company • 95, 96, 100, 114, 123, 134, 158, 170, 171
Metropolitan National Bank • 97
Meurk Carl R. • 149
Meurk, Jacklyn Fisher • 149
Millers' National Federation • 152, 206, 207, 214
Milling, flour • 20, 24-26, 29, 31-35, 43, 47, 71, 72, 75-77, 82, 92, 98-100, 106-108, 112-114, 119-125, 129, 131, 133-136, 142, 144, 146, 147, 152-155, 158, 172-181, 186, 192, 193, 195, 196
Missoula, Montana • 62, 67, 69, 70, 75, 82, 119, 142-145
Mississippi • 21, 26
Missouri • 14, 26, 32-35, 37-67, 69, 74, 75, 83, 93, 97, 98, 108, 120, 122, 124, 126, 127, 137, 138, 160-163, 168, 172, 195, 197, 202, 205, 207, 211
Missouri Lumber & Mining Company • 41, 55, 58, 59, 163
Missouri Lumber & Exchange Company • 55
Missouri, University of • 47, 48, 52
Montana • 14, 50, 62, 67-74, 76-78, 80, 82, 83, 87, 97, 109, 112, 129, 143, 144, 149, 153, 165, 168, 172, 173, 197, 210
Montana State College • 67, 76, 206
Montana, University of • 144
Moore, W. Donald • 179
Moss, David H. • 97
Mount Vernon, Washington • 114, 117
Mukilteo, Washington • 85, 209
Murphy, Andrew • 50, 51, 62, 162
Musser, C. R. • 166
National Livestock & Mining Company • 65, 100, 125
Nebraska • 60, 61
Nettleton, George H. • 40
Nevada • 26, 27
Newman, Peggy Locke • 152
Newman, Virgil C. • 152
New York • 18, 27, 58, 63
Nicaragua • 27
Norton Brothers • 167
Ohio • 13, 15-21, 26, 70, 172
Ohio, Thirty Ninth • 21-23
Olympia, Washington • 169
Ontario • 27, 29-31, 72, 112, 172, 193, 194, 197
Oregon State College • 145, 217
Oregon, University of • 150, 217
Orleans, Missouri • 32, 33, 120 122, 194, 211, 221
Overman, Jay • 144
Overman, Marion Fisher • 144
Ozark Land & Lumber Company • 41, 42, 47, 58
Ozark region • 14, 33, 40-42, 53, 54, 58, 87, 108, 160, 161, 224
Penney, J. C. • 212, 213, 221, 222
Penney stores • 50, 64, 221
Pennsylvania • 16, 18, 58, 87
Pettibone, W. B. • 59, 84, 85
Portsmouth, Ohio • 17, 18, 20, 24, 27, 28, 31, 192, 193
Price, General • 22
Quillen, Clarence E. • 163
Rabinowitz, Jenee Fisher • 150
Rabinowitz, Mario • 150
Railroads • 16, 39, 40, 60, 87, 88, 93, 94, 161, 167
Rainier, Mount • 94
Ramsay, Charles • 50, 51
Real estate • 97, 133, 134, 149, 158, 170, 171
Red Lodge, Montana • 62, 70, 202, 210
Reimers, F. W. • 166
Rhode Island • 18
Robbins, Dewey • 178
Robinson, Euphemia • see Fisher, Euphemia Robinson
Robinson, William • 29, 193, 197, 206
Rosecrans, General • 21
St. Joseph, Missouri • 26, 32
St. Louis, Missouri • 32, 52, 62, 63, 155, 193, 197, 204
San Francisco, California • 27, 81, 82, 84, 101, 113, 149, 150, 165, 202
Scotland • 18
Sawmills • see Lumbering
Seattle • see Washington (state)
Seattle-First National Bank • 97, 109, 143, 169
Sellars, Charles • 143
Sellars, Sally Fisher • 143
Smalley, H. H. • 40, 115, 202
Smith College • 150, 217

Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company • 90, 91, 107, 114, 119, 142, 154, 165, 222
Snoqualmie Valley • 85, 87-90, 93, 107, 165
Spokane, Washington • 113, 117, 127, 147, 169
Springfield, Missouri • 33, 41, 52-68
Stanford University • 154, 155, 217
Stillwell, A. E. • 59
Swanson, M. L. • 179
Stimson, C. D. • 183, 184
Tacoma, Washington • 82, 89, 93, 94, 189, 203
Television • see KOMO
Tennessee • 21, 23, 26, 193
Thurman, C. Willis • 149
Thurman, Elaine Fisher • 149
Totem Broadcasters, Inc. • 187
Van Dorn, General • 22
Virginia City, Nevada • 27
Virginia Military Institute • 48, 51, 211
War, Civil • 21-24, 33, 38, 220
War, First World • 109
War, Second World • 135
Warren, Douglas • 155
Warren, Elizabeth Dent • 154
Warren, George Fisher • 7, 80, 154, 201, 210, 217
Warren, George Fisher, Jr. • 154
Warren, Jeannette Jahn • 156
Warren, John Oliver • 7, 113, 135, 155, 156, 217
Warren, John Oliver, Jr. • 156
Warren, Judith • 156
Warren, Keith • 155
Warren, Lula Fisher • 14, 34, 45, 48, 52, 56, 67, 74, 90, 104, 113, 117, 119, 126, 129, 131, 136, 197, 204-206, 209, 217, 223
Warren, Mary • 155
Warren, Mary Douglas • 155
Warren, Robert • 156
Warren, Wendy • 156
Warren, William Willard • 14, 60, 61, 67, 77, 90, 98, 101, 104, 107, 108, 112, 113, 115, 129, 130, 154, 165, 173, 175, 222, 223
Warren, William Willard, Jr. • 7, 80 135, 154, 180, 190, 217
Warren, William Willard, 3rd • 155
Washington (state) • 14, 74, 75, 77, 80, 83-100, 104-125, 127, 129, 131-139, 143-156, 165-191, 216
Washington, University of • 142-146, 150-156, 217
Wentworth Military Academy • 52, 210
Weyerhaeuser interests • 82, 85, 88-91, 96, 107, 108, 134, 142, 165-167
Wheelersburg, Ohio • 15-20, 192
White, C. F. • 96
White-Dulany Company • 138, 173, 180, 223
White, Dr. Franklin • 60
White-Grandin Lumber Company • 164
White, John Barber • 55, 58-61, 71, 74, 84, 85, 98, 101, 162, 164, 173, 174, 210, 221
White, Raymond B. • 222
Wing, Llewellyn F. • 179
Winona, Missouri • 41
Wisconsin • 16, 41, 167
Wyoming • 26, 50, 212
Yale University • 217
Zenith, Washington • 119, 127, 147
Zoom (cereal) • 146, 178, 179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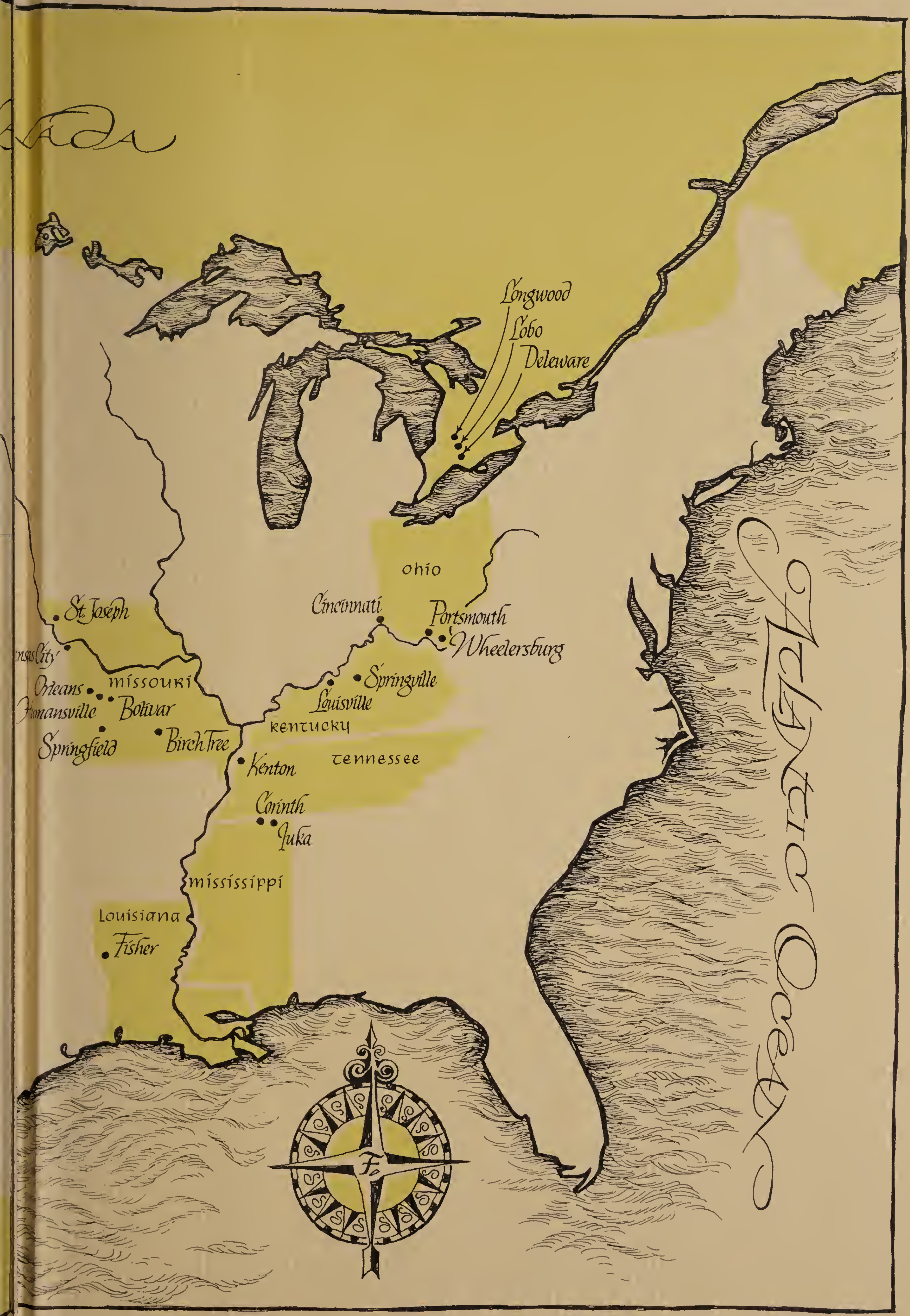
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